FROM

GOLGOTHA TO HEAVEN

BY STEPHEN D. ECKSTEIN

Jewish Christian Missionary

Published by:

J. C. Choate Publications

Winona/Singapore/New Delhi/Cape Town

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Stephen D. Eckstein

Second Printing, 1995, 2,000 copies

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This Book

is

Affectionately Dedicated

to

My Five Children

Stephen Daniel, Paul David, John Milton,

Adele Ruth and William Louis

FOREWORD

In 1959, my father wrote his first book *From Sinai to Calvary*. The reception was so remarkable he had a second edition printed in 1967. Readers over the world have written him and expressed their appreciation for the insight they have received into Jewish traditions concerning religion. Prompted by numerous requests for additional information about Jewish concepts and ideas which he experienced before he became a Christian, my father has written this sequel to his first book. It was designed to expand and deepen the reader's perception of some of his experiences in Judaism and with those of his former co-religionists. From a treasure house of eighty years living, he has endeavored to share the heartaches and trials as well as the joys and anticipations of the true child of God. He has looked beyond the great love and sacrifice of Christ on the old rugged cross to the celestial meeting with all the faithful in heaven itself, to appear in the very presence of God's own Son. It is my father's ardent hope that everyone who reads this book will be illuminated, uplifted and, as Isaiah the prophet said, "mount up with wings like an eagle."

Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr.

Introduction

In 1959 brother Stephen D. Eckstein published a book entitled **From Sinai To Calvary**. In 1974, **From Golgotha To Heaven** was published. Both books have been popular enough to be printed again and again.

Brother Eckstein, reared in Russia in the Jewish religion, came to America as a young adult. Here he learned the truth and obeyed the Lord, putting himself in position to write **From Sinai To Calvary** as a personal experience. His is an interesting and inspiring story, filled with inside information about the Jewish religion and of his experiences in becoming a Christian.

From Golgotha To Heaven continues the insights into Judaism and brother Eckstein's experiences as a Christian, with emphasis on Christ and preparation for heaven itself. It was a long road for the Ecksteins, with the many problems and difficulties inherent in changing from Judaism to Christianity, but it was well worth it. Brother and sister Eckstein lived long and fruitful lives, and through their children and grand children, and these books, they live on, continuing to bear good fruit for the Lord.

Again, I am honored to be asked by Stephen Eckstein, Jr. to reprint his father's second book. May God bless him for his desire to enlarge his father's voice in this way.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS
July 24, 1995

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CHAPTER 1

VAYIKROH

When a Jewish boy reaches the age of four or five years, he can read the Hebrew alphabet and is then ready to enter "Chaider" (elementary school which existed in every Jewish community). The Chaider is a private school in the sense that the "Melamdim" (teachers) receive their fees directly from the parents. Our Chaider consisted of half of one large room, partitioned by a curtain which had two large wooden tables, surrounded by rough wooden benches, on which boys of ages from five to thirteen years sat. Usually the other side served as a kitchen, bed-chamber, dining room and an entrance. Our room had one window, and also its own entrance! Hence, we did not have to go through where the teacher and his family lived.

Rebekah, the pious wife of the teacher, whose love, loyalty, and devotion expressed her pleasure of doing a "Mitvah" (good deed) usually had the company of a middle aged or elderly woman. Although their talks were at times very enthusiastic and to them world shaking, they did not interfere with our studies. Later, I learned they were trying to work out a match between a young widower with two small children (his wife left no relatives on her side) and a Jewess, who was the only support of her widowed mother. Chaneh Baileh, the widow and mother, had a marriageable daughter, a lovely, friendly, delightful, and dignified girl. The young lady had an enchanting smile which melted everything before her. Notwithstanding her fine and noble attributes, she did not have any money for a dowry which was necessary to consummate a match.

One elderly lady, with incomparable delight, remarked,

"I remember my grandfather who was a rabbi (blessed be his memory) said that according to the Talmud thirty days before a child is created it is announced in heaven who will be the future man's or woman's mate." Immediately, the eyes of Rebekah, the teacher's wife, sparkled and with an expression of love and humility, she exclaimed, "I know that God matched mates in heaven, but the fragrance of a little dowry would help immeasurably to sweeten their life." The women agreed to call a certain Jewish "Bal-zadokoh" (philanthropist) who might give two hundred rubles dowry so that a match could be consummated. (It is very strange, yet remarkable, that the Hebrew language does not have a word for "charity." "Tzedokoh" or righteousness and religion are almost synonymous terms in Judaism. To a son of Abraham, one is unthinkable without the other. Even those reformed Jews who have liberalized some of the Hebrew prayer book have not tampered with Tzedokoh.) So when they approached Ha-Rav Samuel (title like a leader), who had an enlightened concept of "Tzedokoh" (philanthropy), he gladly gave the two hundred rubles for the dowry. As he gave the dowry, the philanthropist pronounced a blessing that the couple might live a long harmonious happy life. Tzedokoh (philanthropy) is given "Sether" (in secret, only the relatives know) as it alludes to or indicates an absence of self importance and self righteousness. Tzedokoh takes precedence over other commandments. If one helps in ceremonies, burials, marriage, circumcision, etc., he receives an even greater blessing. This was the attitude or purpose of that Bal-Tzedokoh, Rabbi Samuel.

To a good Jew, marriage is just as great an event as birth and death. The sanctity and significance is tremendous! The bride and groom fast on the day of the wedding. It is to them just as much as the Day of Atonement is to the whole Jewish congregation. Bride and bridegroom confess their sins and pray for forgiveness.

Most of the time the guests who came to visit the teacher's wife came to discuss and arrange a match. It was of profound importance! If a match was started and ultimately was consummated, the joy and thrill was indescribable! There is a rich reward in heaven in store for them for bringing a couple together in marriage. This happened several times during my "chaider" days.

Although the Jewish boy starts with "Chumas" (the five books of Moses), he begins reading the first chapter of "Vayikroh" (Leviticus , the customary Hebrew title is Vayikroh) instead of "Beraichis" (Genesis). Although Leviticus is the third book of the Pentateuch, and is the shortest book of the five, "Vayikroh" is the basis for the major part of the Jewish religion. The influence of the book is tremendous! It is primarily a book of laws, of worship, of sacrifices, offerings, and systems generally of priestly matters. The Levites are referred to only occasionally. "Vayoumer" (the first word in Leviticus—literally THUS SAITH THE LORD) is full of beautiful illustrations, types, shadows, so meaningful and potent! It is also typical and prophetic of Jesus's sacrifice, not the lamb of Moses but the "lamb of God who takes the sin of the world." So the Jewish child indirectly, even before he can talk plainly, is already studying the proper meaning of the sin offerings, the trespass offering where the golden text is found in Lev. 17:11 which is connected with blood.

With furtive attempt, their voices filled with mocking, my former co-religionists have asked me countless times about the authenticity and strength of my conversion since I embraced Christianity. How did you change or as you prefer "be regenerated" to a new religion and teaching that is changed from the Old Religion and the crown of the "Torah" (the five books of Moses, the most sacred thing the Jew possesses) which was pronounced and given at Sinai, the world's Law for all time, to all races, colors, re-

ligions, yea to all mankind, to that "Something New" (meaning the Brith-Hachadosha-New Testament)? Can history be proud of it (probably referring to the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis which they accuse the non-Jews as responsible for not lifting a finger or protesting it)?

Others have asked, "What are you going to do with the people of dignity and of great spiritual character who were a tower of strength like Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Rabbi Hillel (the Hillel Foundation which some universities have named after that sage.)? A heathen came to Hillel and asked him to be proselyted to Judaism provided he taught all the doctrine and tenets of Judaism while standing on one foot. Hillel agreed, and said to him, "Do not do unto others what thou wouldst not have others do unto you. This is the whole Torah, or Law; the rest is merely a commentary of it." "Rabbi Moses Maimondies (he was the greatest of all the medieval Jewish philosophers and scholars) and a host of others have made such a contribution to the world. Their imprint is deep and lasting, and has enriched mankind throughout the ages. What are you going to do with them?" (Maimondies was the codifier of the eighteen articles of faith which are quoted in the Hebrew prayer book. There is a saying among the Jews that "from Moses to Moses there is none unto Moses.")

Still others have mockingly asked, "What had that 'Fountain Head' which you gloriously and reverently call Jesus as the Mo-chi-ach (Messiah) done for you and the world? How do you so thrillingly say that accepting Jesus was a momentous decision, even one of glorious magnanimity, which you say shapes the destiny of men, which will prove true for time and eternity? We do not see where your filial love and great zeal for that SOMETHING NEW, who you call Jesus, has enabled you to accomplish anything that would be an honor to your family, to your country men. Our hearts beat painfully for you in your beautiful dream.

What has this contributed to help you in your financial difficulties and other problems which arose in your way? Has it made you richer, fuller, happier, as you strive to follow in the wake of your New Religion, and to conform to the life and pattern of Jesus?" There is considerable which we could say to answer these questions and accusations but we believe a simile will vividly illustrate our position or point of view.

A man with considerable wealth and influence heard that in a far away country there was a certain chemical compound whose elements were made into remarkable salve. If this particular ointment was applied or spread upon or over the body, no arrow, spear, lance or knife could penetrate or pierce the skin. It would simply glance or slip off very smoothly leaving the person unscratched and without injury.

This news excited the man very much. After deliberating and consulting with various authorities and travel agencies, he made himself ready for this long, tedious and arduous journey. He reasoned within himself, "if this ointment will work and do what it claims to do, it will certainly prove to be a milestone in my life and that of others. It will bring safety to those exposed to danger and harm, yea even death. It would bring indescribable joy to my fellow man."

After weeks of travel, this good industrialist finally reached that far away country where he could obtain that famous costly formula. After securing the formula and some of the ointment, he embarked on the long and tiresome return journey. He was informed that one stretch of the road was fraught with danger, even possible torture and death. It was infested by robbers lurking in a thick forest nearby, waiting to rob unsuspecting travelers of money, jewels and other valuables. After robbing them, they usually attacked ferociously with spears, arrows and daggers. Dead men do not tell tales. Therefore, the industrialist decided to spread the ointment over his body, for protection.

As that traveler entered the thick forest, armed robbers leaped from their hiding places and seized him. After robbing him of his money belt and other valuables, they began to savagely attack him with their weapons. But to their amazement and astonishment, they noticed that their sharp arrows and spears glanced off the man as he stood erect with chest out, smiling broadly at them. Their weapons were useless.

While the traveler's face beamed with joy and great delight, cold sweat began to pour down the faces of the horrified bandits. They thought it was a spook, ghost or a phantom. They stood for a few moments stonelike, motionless, pale! Then, they looked at each other with consternation and fear.

After partially gaining their equilibrium, the thieves all took a long breath, and in their bewilderment, with springing steps hardly touching the ground, began to run. Immediately, the traveler called to them to halt, not to run and not to be fearful as no harm would come to them. His words were strong and resolute and so they returned as if they were putty in his hand. Instead of taking them into custody and turning them over to the authorities for punishment, the industrialist invited the robbers to his mansion where a sumptuous feast was prepared for them to enjoy. Also, he presented them with many costly gifts.

After the lavish and splendid dinner, the thieves asked him why he had treated them so graciously when they deserved punishment and possibly even death? Why did you invite us to such an expensive feast? What prompted you to do this most humane and compassionate act? It is almost unbelievable. The Lord can contain the enemy who is jealous of us from dipping his pen into poison and trying to harm us through slander. He also can convert a furious adversary into a brother in Christ. The first time our Jewish convert brother Stephen Neederman came into our mission, he was

filled with hatred and misunderstanding. The language used was frightening! That is expressing it mildly (Prov. 16:7).

The industrialist invited them into the drawing room and asked them to sit down. An intense silence filled the room. Then he told of his long journey and why he traveled nearly half way around the earth. "I did not spare expense, time or energy in my pursuit of this expensive and coveted formula until I finally secured it." "But you see," he said, with passionate reverence, "I did not know if it would work and do all it was supposed to do. Therefore, I thought I would spread it over my own body and try it out on myself first, before risking its use on someone else. If it would save my own life, I knew that it would be of value to suffering humanity. When you threw the spears and shot arrows at me and they glanced off, I immediately knew the ointment was genuine. I shall always be grateful to you because you tested it under real conditions and the invincibility of the ointment has been proved beyond a shadow of a doubt. You are witnesses to it."

We believe this beautiful illustration we narrated has well demonstrated to my former co-religionists that my conversion from Judaism to Christianity was not fraud but genuine and true. Jesus had been tried, tested (if we may be allowed to use such an expression) to the uttermost since my decision to accept the gospel of Christ and be immersed INTO HIM. I can say unhesitatingly that He has not only fulfilled my fondest hopes but in countless instances has fulfilled beyond my cherished hope and expectation, "far above all that we ask or think." His guidance to me is strongly in evidence, even today! Before I was converted I had a dreadful sense of emptiness and hopelessness. I was ready to commit suicide. However, when Jesus came into my life, He was not simply a historical figure, but He came in as a Living Christ and filled my life with hope, joy and peace. Now there is a passionate desire in my heart to see that my brethren too come under the banner of Christ, that

they too might look forward to the hope of eternal life and endless blessedness!

The importance of Christ lies not in His raising Lazarus from the dead, turning water into wine and other miracles, but that HE IS GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, OUR ATONEMENT, OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR AND GLORIFIED REDEEMER! Everything yields to the sovereign power of Christ.

When I remember that as a little boy I began to study so diligently God's inspired Word from the first chapter of "Vayrikroh" (Leviticus), little did I ever dream that in Vayikroh (which is the greater part of the basis of the Jewish religious laws) would I find or see that the supreme expressions, which are basic and fundamental (the sacrifices of blood etc.,) were prophetic utterances which pointed to Jesus the Messiah! Vayikroh reflects a rich and meaningful teaching that has meant so much to my life! If you study it diligently, it will inspire your life, also.

CHAPTER 2

BACK TO BACK

Near our little town Sassmack, there was a castle with several buildings surrounding it where a prince or some nobility used to live. It was several centuries old perhaps dating back to about 1500. A regiment of cavalry soldiers was stationed there in order to patrol the rather large area which was in a state of upheaval. The country was seething with violence effected by revolutionists against the Czar. The castle was strategically located so that some segments of the cavalry could be moved swiftly within a very short time to the various locations where the potential revolutionists were active. The population was oppressed and frightened, desiring a more democratic government. The revolutionists were always on the offensive and would strike swiftly, unpredictably and effectively at vulnerable places as they had friends and sympathizers everywhere. It was extremely difficult, virtually impossible to subjugate the aroused populace as they would not provide information to the government.

The castle named "Dundag" was located on a very large estate comprising tens of thousands of acres. It took in a considerable part of a thick dense forest through which was cut a highway to the town of Sassmack. It was about ten miles from one side of the forest to the other at the most narrow place. Even when traveling through it in the daytime in summer, it was very dark, gloomy and depressing. In that stretch of narrow forest, dangerous wolves were seen. Sassmack was the nearest town to "Dundag."

Among the military personnel who were helping to sup-

press the subversives were two Jewish soldiers. Whenever they had the opportunity, they would visit Sassmack and enjoy the hospitality of a Jewish home and eat "gefilte fish," which makes my mouth water as I think about it. Under their present living conditions in the barracks, they could not get it. Consequently, they eagerly looked forward for any chance to visit.

Winter as a rule set in about November first for five to six months with inclement and frigid weather. Blizzard conditions with drifting snow and temperatures dropping to forty below were not uncommon. The inhabitants, who knew what was going to happen, did not get excited but took precautionary measures to protect themselves from the severe and prolonged storms. No snow plows were available to clear the deep snow from the roads as in the United States. Lacking such equipment, drifts were so deep as to often make travel impossible. Often people and merchants traveling on business were stranded and had to wait for moderating weather before they could resume their journey safely.

We lived in a two family house. Here we would call it a duplex. There was a passage about ten feet wide between our house and that of the landlord. The roof of the house was almost flat. However, it was thick and reinforced. It was built very sturdily no that neither rain or snow could penetrate and thus cause any inconvenience. It was covered with pitch which kept either the rain or melting snow from seeping through the ceiling.

When I was a little boy, I had a traumatic experience. Although it was frightening, it was rather humorous. Once a prolonged heavy snowstorm, with drifting snow, piled up mountainous drifts, covering the windows and reaching almost to the rooftop. About midnight (incidently, during the winter, the nights are very long), our landlord knocked on the door, woke us up, and told everyone to get dressed as wolves were in the neighborhood and probably would come

into our yard, (a yard in Latvia might mean several acres). On account of the terrible snowstorm, the pangs of hunger had driven the ferocious beasts from the forest into our village. With the exception of the military and police, few if any had any firearms. Our landlord had a large German Shepherd dog and he gave the first alarm that the huge timber wolves were in the yard as he began to bark fiercely. Before we could open the blocked door that led into the passageway to let the dog in, the wolves attacked. Man's best friend put up a gallant fight but was no match for several of these large hungry beasts.

Suddenly, we heard the wolves prowling on our roof. Immediately, we made a bigger fire in the fireplace, hoping the thick smoke would keep them away from the chimney. Although we had some fear they might fall into the fireplace, we were more concerned that their heavy weight might break through the roof. Some of the beasts were as large as a calf and that would be terrible. No telling what would happen.

Fearful they might break through the door, we shoved a large old sewing machine (with a footpaddle) against the thick wooden door. We also piled big blocks of wood which we used in our large oven (we did not burn coal, as a matter of fact, I never saw coal until I left home. One could crawl into the oven and in a crouched position turn around.) In case the wolves should happen to get into the passageway leading to our door, they could not push it open so easily. Everyone of us helped. In case a wolf was able to push a paw through the crack in the door, my oldest brother stood guard with a little hatchet. Somehow, one wolf made a violent shove and put its paw into the crack. Quick as a flash, my brother came to the rescue with the little hatchet and nipped the wolf paw with it. Immediately, the wolf withdrew with some kind of a howl.

Later we heard shooting. We knew the military had either killed or driven off the wolves and everyone gave a sigh of

relief. The next morning, we went out and saw two large dead Russian timberwolves. It was frightening to look at the carcasses.

Although the Czarist government was fraught with tyranny, oppression, despotism, decadence, abuse of power, a trampling of justice, it granted the Jews in the armed forces in the vast Russian empire permission for a furlough for the Jewish holidays "Rosh-Hashona" (New Year), "Yom-Kippur" (Day of Atonement) and "Jahrzait" (the anniversary of parents death).

Notwithstanding that not all Jewish military personnel were not fanatically religious, the great majority who were granted leave of absence would attend Divine service in the synagogue and follow the precepts (there were very few Reformed temples at that time). By gathering in the houses of worship, the soldiers would hear teaching from Talmudic scholars and their deep religious convictions which would help to break somewhat the somberness and depression of their military life.

The reason I tell this narrative is that in the garrison mentioned were stationed two Jewish soldiers from deep in Russia. They desired a pass for thirty-six hours as one of the Jewish cavalrymen happened to have "Jahrzait" (the anniversary of one of his parent's death which was observed yearly). The "Kadesh" (prayer of intercession for the dead parent) is recited each "death day anniversary."

A Jew may live in a spiritual vacuum a whole year, but on "Jahrzait," condescendingly with great clarity and flaming devotion, recite "Kadesh" in the synogogue. It is hard for a non-Jew who is not able to see into the spirit of the Jews to grasp the significance and tremendous weight and power which the magic word "Jahrzait" has. It is interesting to note that as the years pass, it becomes more reinforced with extraordinary meaning and deep feeling. To the Gentile world, it is ridiculous, fantastic, and the complicated ideas become incomprehensible.

"Jahrzait" for that Jewish soldier's father came to pass in February. In the summer time, one could ride the fourteen miles in two hours. This being winter, they thought they could make it in three hours without difficulty as they had done it before. The weather was not too threatening and they thought it would be clear later in the day so that they would be on time for "Jahrzait." Being in the cavalry, they always carried their sabers attached with a belt, but did not have their guns. (Incidently, the later Brother Stephen A. Neederman, one of our aged Jewish converts, was a cavalry officer while he served in the Austro-Hungarian army. He told me that he had seen Kaiser Frantz Joseph several times. He gave me his spurs which he used to wear. They are almost one hundred years old.)

As the two soldiers were riding along, the weather began to deteriorate and soon a frightening blizzard was howling around them. The horses, sensing something, became unresponsive in behavior and acted frightened. Notwithstanding that it gives a person pride to be in the saddle, the soldiers dismounted. Just then, they saw timber wolves emerging from the forest. Quickly the wolves began to kick snow with their hind legs into the soldiers eyes, nearly blinding them. With much difficulty, they tied up their horses, took off their belts, and tied themselves together with their belts, BACK TO BACK. They also tied their sabers securely to their wrists so they would not slip off or become loose. Such would have been disastrous, if not fatal. Within a short time, their eyes were almost blinded by the fine snow kicked by the wolves and whipped by the storm. Now they had to resort to sheer brute strength as they kept swinging their long razor sharp sabers, back and forth. This kept the beasts at some distance, but the wolves evidently instinctively sensed the soldiers' strength was waning and that the soldiers knew they were in mortal danger.

The two Jewish soldiers knew that their lives depended upon their endurance. Several times, they thought or felt

that their sabers had nipped some of the wolves and perhaps inflicted wounds but not sufficiently severe to drive them off. As they continued to swing their sabers, their wrists began to tire and swell under the intense strain. Their strength was about exhausted and was beginning to ebb. Although they thought no one would venture out into such a blizzard, the remote possibility that someone or ones, caught out in the frightful storm like themselves, might come along and help them, gave added endurance and impetus to them to hold on and fight for their very lives.

Fortunately, several sled loads of workers who were on their way to a sawmill came to their rescue in the very nick of time and drove off the vicious beasts. They took the completely exhausted soldiers to our village where these men related their terrifying experience. They indicated that they could not have lasted another hour and that the decision to tie themselves BACK TO BACK had undoubtedly saved their lives.

CHAPTER 3

THE DUCAT

The little town Phillten lies in a lovely green plain on the edge of the Baltic sea. The town was clean and attractive and had two beautiful parks. The natural scenery, was picturesque. In the summer time people used to come there for relaxation, swimming, etc. The climate there was very healthy.

There lived a Jewish man, named Abraham Leibovitz, who was known for his hospitality; it was a feature of his family life. On the table of the dining room, there was always a "somahvar" (self boiler-tea-machine). A guest entering the dining room would immediately feel at home and would be seated and invited to drink tea, with lemon cut up on a plate or in a little bowl, and also lump-sugar. Various topics would be discussed. Mr. Leibovitz was also known for his piety, a Talmudic scholar, a giant in the knowledge of the holy doctrine. He would always wear a skull cap. According to tradition one is not permitted to venture out and walk even four yards without a covered head. The penalty for not obeying it is very severe. His wife Githe-Baileh was a pious and noble woman, visiting the sick and collecting money for the support of poor students of the sacred literature. No sacrifice on her part was too great for the holy cause.

Mr. Leibovitz was by profession a silversmith, and the only one in that area. He learned that handicraft in a large city in Germany. There he sat at the feet of a master and learned the specialties of that fine trade. Notwithstanding that he was the only silversmith in that community and con-

stantly occupied, yet he combined his trade with "chazzones" (Cantor). In order to qualify for that holy function as a "cantor," he must be trustworthy, a married man, and one who fulfills God's purpose. He also must possess a good knowledge of the Hebrew lore! Being the congregational representative he would realize the profound importance and sacredness in leading the congregation in prayer. If any of the qualifications are lacking, he most certainly will not qualify for that sacred position as "Chazzan" (Cantor). The congregation would as a rule give more attention to the above named qualities, than to his voice and his talent in singing; of course the sweetness and pleasantness of the "Chazzan's" voice was a great asset. But the main thing was that he had to be earnest, and that his mind be occupied with holy learning, and an "emunah" (faith) that strengthens the mind and heart for every challenge. Much emphasis is placed upon correct pronunciation of the Hebrew, which, he read from the Hebrew prepared prayer books with deepest reverence and solemnity.

He did not get any remuneration for his "chazzones" neither did he thirst for glory, or great reputation, but did this because of his deep love for God. The key for this holy phase of work or activity was the outgrowth of his maximum involvement in the deeper things of life. He enjoyed real contentment and happiness. Food, clothing, and shelter were important indeed, but to him the fundamental thing was to serve the "Bauraih" (Creator).

When a Jewish boy reaches the age of thirteen years, he becomes "Bar-mitzvah" (literally, Son of the Commandments). It is comparable to confirmation, assuming responsibility in religious matters. From the first day of his existence, the child of Jewish parents is surrounded by a religious atmosphere. His life is full of piety and devotion. Besides the religious and literary studies, it was customary for parents to send their boys away to learn a trade which was very vital. This was done right after "Bar-mitzvah."

To pursue rabbinic studies without acquiring a trade such as tailor, shoemaker, silversmith, watchmaker, etc., was to equip oneself for life in an incomplete manner. Even among the rich it was prudent, proper and important to have their sons learn some handicraft! There is a precept in the "Ethics of the Fathers," "Im aim kemach, aim Torah, im aim Torah, aim kemach." (If there is no bread, there can be no study of the Law: if there is no Law, there will be no bread.)

Mr. Israel Kobalsky, who lived about a hundred miles from Phillten, had a son Phinehas who became "Bar-Mitzvah." He was brought up in a home where his parents tried to impress upon him the solemn and sacred impression of the Holy Law. Reared in an environment where the central subject was to inculcate the Law of Moses and the doctrine of the Talmud, the influence was very effective upon Phinehas.

Not being too far from Phillten, Mr. Kobalsky, thought after consulting with the rabbi, that it would be a good and profitable thing for their "Ben-Yochid" (only son) to learn a worthy handicraft under the tutelage of that venerable silversmith Abraham Leibovitz, an observant of the Law of Moses and dedicated to the traditions of the wise men of Zion. Phinehas would have a fine home, and the environment would be congenial. After meeting with the renowned rabbi, a verbal agreement was made that Phinehas would be there three years. In addition to his training as silversmith, he would be in good and wholesome company, where he would attend the synagogue services and hear his master's emotional exaltation in prayer and communion with God. Dear reader, by many, yea a great many, this was regarded as more important than the daily meal. Strange and humorous, and even ridiculous, this may sound, especially in this gluttonous age!

Leibovitz was a true master in silversmith work as an engraver. His artistic work adorned many articles: for example the little silver plate that is used for "charoses"

(bitter herbs for the Passover engraved with some Hebrew letters and on silver goblets for wine). He had many demands for his rich artistic design.

After Phinehas' "Bar-mitzvah," his aged grandfather presented him with a gift of a "Ducat" (a gold piece) that was sent to him by his son from Africa (it is customary to give presents such as a watch, a purse, etc., at the "Bar-mitzvah). Naturally young Phinehas was nurtured in a strict Jewish home, where his parents were tending the sacred fire of the family altar, inspiring him to the deeper things of life, kindling the light of "Enumah" (faith) which was the very essence of their homelife. Phinehas valued the "Ducat" very much, especially that it came from his dead uncle whom he had never seen. Hence, the "Ducat" became more valuable. He cherished it so very much that he took it along with him and guarded it with sacred jealousy.

One day a Jewess came in and inquired where his master, Abraham Leibovitz was. Being a Hebrew scholar and a lover of sacred literature, he was usually immersed in a portion of the Talmud in his spare time. When he came in from the adjacent room, Phinehas told him that a lady would like to see him with regard to some work. The Jewish lady told him that she would like him to melt some old silver tablespoons into a miniature "louchous" (the ten commandments) and to inscribe in Hebrew the first letter of each commandment. It was to be placed, fastened with a small silver chair, on the Saifer-Torah (holy scroll) to adorn it. She wanted the Decalougue in memory of her father, 'olev-Hasolem' (upon him be peace—added after mentioning the name of the deceased person).

The "Torah" (the five books of Moses) is the most sacred thing that the Jewish people possess. Men died for it and suffered martyrdom. Only recently I read where there was a fire in a Synagogue, and Jews literally, risked their lives to rescue "Saifer-Torahs" (Holy Scrolls). She brought along

the silver table spoons to be melted for that particular ornament. It is interesting to note, that in the Ark of the Covenant where the holy Scrolls are kept, no other item is permitted, not even Talmud. Hence regarding the sacredness, it is singular and incomparable.

Abraham Leibovitz accepted the old silver table spoons and goblet to be melted into an ornament, upon which he would engrave in Hebrew the first letter of each commandment. He told her that he would have it ready for the High-Holiday "Shevooth" (Pentecost). According to Jewish tradition it is "Zmaahn-Touraisainu" (The time our Law was given). Because the Law was given on Pentecost, the rabbis wished to make that Day the most enjoyable of the year. Thus, it would be more fitting to have it on that day.

He took the silver spoons and goblet, melted them, and waited for the contents to cool. But to his amazement, and utter astonishment he immediately noticed the presence of a foreign substance, not that of pure silver, which he had carefully placed in the melting pot. The brown substance was nothing short of pure gold, as he noticed by its color. He knew that he had used only pure silver, and had checked it very carefully. He was puzzled! He knew that gold was not rolling in the streets as very few possess gold, let alone handle it carelessly! He called to Phinehas, and inquired if he had seen any one come in during the time while the contents were melting. Some one had put some pure gold in that melting pot.

Immediately, like an electric current going through his heart, Phinehas remembered when his pious father was called to the "Beemah" (a table in the middle of the Synagogue). The Holy Scroll is taken out from the Ark of the covenant, placed upon the table, rolled open, and a portion of the Pentateuch, is read.) He recalled how his father took the corner of the "Talith" (prayer shawl worn at the morning service), pressed it upon the first word of the scripture that was to be read, and kissed his holy "Talith" which

through the contact with the Holy Scroll, became more holy than before. The memory overawed him and chiselled in his young mind the SACREDNESS OF THE "SAIFER-TORAH" (the five books of Moses).

Phinehas replied, "Master," his face beaming with joy, "I put the gold in the pot." Then he told him that he had a golden "Ducat" which his grandfather gave him for Bar-Mitzvah" and which he prized very highly. But knowing that the silver was to be used to adorn the Saifer-Torah, and burning with zeal for God and the holy Torah, he wanted to have some small part by adding the precious metal which he thought would make it that much more precious. Although just 13 years old, he had the burning love that had been instilled in his young heart, to serve God. He wanted to give HIM the dearest and most precious thing he had in his possession. It was sanctified in his way of thinking! Amazing love!

His master, Abraham Leibovitz, was profoundly touched and moved by his deep love, devotion and sacrifice that he exclaimed, "God be praised for such a precious soul brought into the covenant of father Abraham!"

The question arises, how many "alabaster-boxes" have we broken at the feet of our blessed Lord Jesus? Do we give our best, yea, the very best that we possess? Do I give my very best? Is my faith, young, fresh, strong, and shining for Christ? Do I promote a greater and higher standard, that folk may see my full-overcoming life? Sometimes it becomes necessary to surrender some cherished ideals, so that our relationship with Christ may be closer and more meaningful? That beautiful simile should help to stimulate and invigorate and revitalize us to emulate Him who is All-wise, Wondrous, and Kind. The unparalleled thoughtfulness and selflessness that Phinehas showed is worthy of emulation. Only love for the Lord Jesus can command us to obey His will and way, and sense our hearts for useful service with the dross removed that the pure gold may shine and radiate in our life; not

gild-edged-bonds, but that burning desire to carry the consuming truth, the gospel to precious souls, and feel the influence of His life and task! When we see any one so devoted as this we know he is sincere, but that is not evidence that his zeal is acceptable to God, and according to knowledge. Rom. 10:3 clearly depicts this. The apostle Paul commended the zeal of his brethren in the flesh for their zeal, but denounces it as to spiritual effectiveness; it is based on the righteousness of man and not of God!

CHAPTER 4

THE SHEPHERD BAG

The Lord is my shepherd. Perhaps no part of the Bible has had more influence than the 23rd Psalm. It is a classic in literature. The weight and force is a dynamic power, a track full of light. Nevertheless, there is nothing more neglected by peoples' indifferences than its true spiritual meaning which is of supreme importance. Countless books, hymns, and poems have been written utilizing this Psalm.

The comfort and consolation it has brought upon the hearts and lives of suffering humanity is incalculable! Parents at the bedside of their sick children, soldiers in the fox-holes, sailors on ships, and folks in everyday tasks of life have received solace in life and death. What person does not know the 23rd Psalm? Even children can and do recite it with special consecration, zest, and intense delight.

It is called the "SHEPHERD PSALM." In adversity and in joy it is cited. It is used in funerals. It is also used as "Mottos" on walls. It has been a true comfort to generations gone by. It is so vast, so meaningful, yet simple and appealing. Some have classed it as a superb collection of literary rubies. Some of us have traversed the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" yet the Lord enabled us to bear up and stay above the fear of evil. Even when pressed and oppressed the presence of the "GREAT SHEPHERD" has been our strength and His crook prevented the foe from giving us any deadly wounds. We shall here dwell only on the first phrase "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

David, once a humble shepherd lad, became a mighty king. Having received the most exalted position, the greatest

honor man can wish to receive, he lived, ruled, flourished, conquered and triumphed. Notwithstanding, David said, "though I am king, I cast myself forever at thy feet; although a king, I am proud and honored in having the blessed privilege to call thee "MY SHEPHERD." Each concept influences the other. Here is a beautiful and wonderful simile!

There is a remarkable story concerning a world traveler. He heard of a renowned king in a far-away country who was not only known for his fabulous wealth and Oriental treasures, but for his extraordinary collection of rare and costly art and sculpture. Excited by the report, the traveler embarked on the difficult but challenging adventure. Upon arrival in the country, he immediately went to the magnificent ivory palace. The visitor followed the royal escort up a flight of stairs and entered a great hall where the king sat on his royal throne. Greatly excited, the traveler presented his credentials. The king received him with the utmost friendliness. Through an interpreter, the visitor said he had heard many tales of the famous things which the king possessed and that he was very eager and anxious to see them. Graciously, the king himself escorted the traveler around the palace, through the garden with its choicest flowers and flowing fountains. Then he took him into a great library and showed him the priceless manuscripts, ancient books, scrolls, and documents. After that the king led him into another magnificent room containing the most famous Michaelangelo paintings and other rare arts of old masters. The visitor was enraptured by their magnificence. Then the king took him into another room where old Greek and Roman sculpture was housed. As the traveler gazed upon them, he was made almost speechless because of its grandeur and majestic beauty! Then he was led into another room containing precious jewels. The visitor was dazzled by their brilliance and luster. He thought, surely this was the finale. What else could be shown that was more valuable and precious than that which already had been shown him?

He was profoundly impressed by what he had seen, and with a feeling of satisfaction was ready to depart grateful to have seen all these marvelous things. But the king said, "you have not seen anything yet. I am going to take you into another room where I will show you the MOST PRECIOUS THING in my VAST DOMAIN." When the world traveler heard these words he said to himself, "what else could he show me that would even in the remotest sense compare with the things he had already shown me?" His heart began to thump with anxiety and he could hardly wait for the moment until his eyes would behold "The Most Precious Thing in the Kingdom."

The king took his guest down the hall to a locked door. When the King opened the door, the traveler noted with utter amazement and bewilderment that the room was devoid of any furniture, but in the corner of the little special room was "a shepherd bag" and a staff. The king said with joy, "Here my friend," pointing his finger to the SHEPHERD BAG AND STAFF, "are the most precious things that I possess." The king then removed his shoes, and requested his guest to do likewise. He said, "It is like Holy Ground. All other things that I have in comparison, pale into utter insignificance."

The King said, "The Lord is My (personal pronoun) SHEPHERD. That "OLD SHEPHERD BAG" is a reminder, what I was once upon a time. Nevertheless, the Lord is still MY SHEPHERD. The SHEPHERD BAG signifies a lowly position. It keeps me humble."

If we give this story a spiritual application, we shall correctly see what that "maoshol" (illustration) of that world traveler really means. Our righteousness is as a "polluted garment." Our old Shepherd Bags, full of sin and unrighteousness, are made clean, white and pure by the blood of "the Lamb" slain from the foundation of the world. We were all "Dead in Trespasses and Sins, but He made us sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus." His grace

is astounding! If we obey and follow Him, He is ready to bestow upon us His Celestial refreshing. Oh, for more exclamations, "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

Not too distant from our little village, there lived an aged Jew of wealth and influence. He was board chairman of a great enterprise, employing many men and women. He was known not only for piety, but for his great philanthropy. He helped not only Jewish "Yesshivah" (Rabbinical Colleges) but non-Jews alike, hospitals, research-work, etc.

He was knighted by the Czar of Russia with the title of "Baron," because of his great humanitarian work among all regardless of race, color, or dress. (Of course that should be the rule of all mankind). In his youth, that wealthy Orthodox Jew used to peddle among the farmers. He carried a pack on his back with merchandise consisting of notions, such as buttons, needles, thread, matches, combs, perfumed soap, scissors, pencils and other items of the same type, small useful articles. That was a common thing to see, especially among the young-unmarried sons of Abraham. He like many other Jews did not have a horse and wagon. As a rule they used to come back to town for the holy Sabbath. They also had a long cane, or staff to help support or lean on in their arduous livelihood. They used to put heavy padding under the part where they had the most weight, in order not to cut or bruise their arms! This particular Jew had "Chavairim" (associates) who too carried packs on their backs. However, he succeeded in business and became a wealthy industrialist. When Jews (or non-Jews) came to that town, naturally they visited him of whom they had heard so much, especially his being knighted by the Czar. That did not happen often. They were shown through the factories, the offices, etc., but that aged son of Abraham took more pride in showing them something that was very, very SPECIAL. He did not take pride in his spacious beautiful offices and large rooms being fitted out for receptions of callers. He was known as a pious, just, compassionate and

friendly man. He used to tell visitors that their visit would be incomplete unless he showed them something which was near and dear to his heart. All other things in his possession were insignificant in comparison to HIS OLD PACK WHICH HE HAD CARRIED ON HIS BACK WHEN HE WAS A PEDDLER.

With deep emotion, solemnity and reverence, he narrated of his youth and how he carried the heavy pack on his back, sometimes nearly to the breaking point. The Jews all listened with marked attention as he explained so graphically how he had risen from a peddler to an industrialist. That "Ol Pack" was a grim and constant reminder to the aged title Jew not to be proud, puffed up with pride, or to be conceited. He did not delight in his position, achievements, or possessions. Through him his home city had become thriving and prosperous. It certainly flourished in commerce. He treated his employees in a most friendly, dignified fashion.

One cannot help but be moved by that respected son of Abraham. He ought to be commended for his noble attributes, good works, and morality which conform to right ideals and principles. (These should be expected from every blood bought Christian, if we emulate Paul, who emulated Christ).

Notwithstanding all the fine qualifications, the Jewish philanthropist did not have the promise of eternal life because he had not accepted Jesus. He lived a Christless life, died a Christless death and went into a Christless eternity. Too terrible to contemplate! The attributes ascribed to that Jew are only physical and transitory. As for meriting "Aulom-Haboh" (eternal life) they were meaningless, worthless!

My dear reader, what does it mean to you? What does it mean to me? What effect does it have upon our life and conduct? That old Jewish industrialist looked back at the OLD PACK which he carried as a poor young man. He was a man of great wealth but without hope.

We too should take a retrospection and see our moldy, corroded lives eaten away by that chemical called sin. We were dead in trespasses and in SIN. Paul says, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Here comes the "BURDEN BEARER," the "SIN BEARER"; he takes the heavy pack from our back, the SIX HUNDRED THIRTEEN precepts which every Jew is obligated to observe according to Jewish tradition. Peter said correctly, "Now therefore why make you trial of God that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. He carries us on His shoulders, and upon his heart, within the veil! He purchased for us through His blood salvation and eternal life. His grace is astounding!

As we look back, we see the most essential thing in our life is the middle Cross of Golgotha on which justice was erected for you and me. We were all "Barabbases." That name brings to my mind a certain incident.

Many years ago, Mordecai, an Orthodox Jew, came to the Hebrew mission in Dallas. We discussed many topics among which was a very touchy one—the brutal "Torahless" Jews (Jews who do not obey or observe or follow the law of Moses as our fathers, and "Zaides" (grandparents did). I said to him (he too was from the Old Country) "your father, like my father, were Sabbath observing Jews, and were religiously inclined. They performed their interior action, with burning zeal and extreme dedication. On Friday night when the holy Sabbath is ushered in, they went, as was their custom to the synagogue for divine worship. When returning to their home, according to tradition, they were escorted by two "MALACHAIH HASCHARETH" (ministering angels). To them it was not imagination, but a reality. The holy law does not impress them anymore. They are not observing the holy Sabbath." He was saddened and admitted that it was so. These Jews desecrate the Sabbath, thereby

showing no loyalty to God. The rabbis claim that by keeping the Sabbath the Jews perpetuate their existence! They cannot bring forth a Jewish spiritual generation. The fundamental principles of Judaism, essential to the Jewish religion, are being flouted. Mordecai concurred with me that their spiritual glory is dimmed, obscured, if not obliterated.

Time after time we discussed about the Mochiach (messiah) of whom the prophets predicted clearly and vividly. All prophetic utterances focus upon Jesus as the Mochiach. Finally, when Mordecai left the Hebrew mission for the last time. I heard him distinctly repeating to himself, "Barabbas, Barabbas, Barabbas!" Undoubtedly, the gospel must have made a profound impression upon him. If he ever accepted Jesus as the Christ of God and was immersed INTO HIM, I do not know. But His word is light and power! It shall not return unto me void. So the Son of God, the Lamb of God took our place. Therefore, He became MOST precious to us. We will delight to see anyone come to Him for joy and liberty. We shall receive sustaining, strengthening, sanctifying, and satisfying grace.

Isaiah, said in the name of the Lord, "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." The Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation."

Hearing is one of the major senses that man possesses. It is a natural means of defense, as a warning of danger. A voice came out of a cloud saying, "this is my son, my chosen; HEAR YE HIM." This was a warning not to take the exhortation lightly. Alas! If Israel would only hear Him. If the world would hear him, it would be a suburb of heaven!

If a person is injured in an auto accident, he is placed on the highway until the ambulance arrives to take him to the hospital. He lies in agony waiting and every minute turns into hours as he suffers excruciating pain. Suppose someone would come along and begin to play a piece from Brahms, Bach or Beethoven. It would be nothing short of mockery

to the injured one. However, notwithstanding his suffering, as soon as his ears begin to hear the wailing siren, to him that becomes the sweetest music in all the world. It need not be elucidated as to why.

John says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." These words of Jesus should be sweet to our ears. The physical pack may bow us down, and crush us. Our shoulders may become galled with the oppressive load.

A joyful unburdened Christian singing praises to our GREAT BURDEN BEARER is pouring out the essence of his heart in gratitude to His Father. Our eternal life will prove worthy of a life of warfare. Palms will be our crown and white robes our guerdon.

The writer, in speechless humility, thanks God that he can look back at Golgotha, the most precious place, where I laid my sin and first saw the light, for the blessed privilege I have had in my declining years to place my pen at the service of my blessed Lord, who did so much for me. However, I realize more and more my unworthiness of His loving kindness and tender mercy. His grace is astounding! Truly, I express, "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD!"

CHAPTER 5

THE LEPER HOUSE

Near our little town of Sassmack, there was a lake about twenty miles long, and its widest place about two miles wide. The narrowest place was about two blocks wide. On our side of the lake you could see spreading fields of hay, grain and oats which year after year remained unchanged and untroubled. Beyond the fertile meadows and little wooded hills the scenery was picturesque. In the summer time it was so very beautiful and colorful. The flowers around the villa (it was near the lake) were impressive and gorgeous. Peasant farms dotted the shore. The lake contained quite a few different species of fish but very little fishing was done. In the winter the whole region was frozen solid and sleds were used freely. In the summer time, we used to go bathing. In our imaginations, the bulrushes would remind us of Moses. Whenever we thought of the incident, we smiled because Pharoah's daughter paid wages to a Jewish mother to nurse her own child.

On the other side of the lake on a hill one could see part of a Leper House and its enclosure which was operated and controlled by the government. A wooden bridge spanned the lake at this narrow place but it was rarely used because of the proximity of the Leper House. Fear of contamination from leprosy hindered most from walking on the bridge; secondly, few needed to cross to the other side.

A report reached our community that a rabbi from Lithuania had been admitted to the Leper House. The news reached our community about six weeks before "Paisach" (Passover). Naturally, the whole Jewish society was enveloped in deep sadness because of the calamity that had

befallen that illustrious rabbi. Conscious that our community was the closest, it was thought best that we should arrange to take care of his needs. The whole community closed ranks as all had one aspiration, one aim, to see that the distinguished rabbi had everything. Immediately, a committee composed of our rabbi, the president of the synagogue and other prominent Jews was formed to provide the leprous rabbi with "matzos" (unleavened bread), wine (for festival purposes) and other necessary articles required for the Passover Feast.

When the Jews commemorate Passover, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, they eat matzos, the traditional Passover food. It is made from flour and water baked in a thin flat sheet, perforated about every half inch. During the eight days of the Passover and feast of unleavened bread, all leavened foods are PROHIBITED, FORBIDDEN. Being an eminent Rabbi, imbued with deep piety, it was fitting that he should have "Matzoh-Shemurah" (guarded matsoh). The grain for the Matzoh-Shemurah must be grown on land which is owned by Orthodox Jews. It must be reaped and ground by them, and they must perform all the baking. Every process MUST be under strict supervision of observant Jews. It is still being practiced by extremely pious Orthodox Jews to this day.

The committee decided all who wished to go and take the Matzoh-Shemurah, wine, etc., to the afflicted rabbi, could go. More than a Minyan (ten males above the age of thirteen) went. According to rabbinical law, less than ten men is never considered a congregation sufficiently large for public devotion.

My uncle Rafael, who was my godfather, was a member of the committee so I was able to go with the group. (At that time my uncle did not have a family, so I was counted one of his own. I used to hang on him, especially in synagogue worship). We crossed the very narrow wooden bridge, or a better word would be a gang plank, which was about two

feet wide with hand rails. When we reached the other side, the Leper House became visible and we could see several of the patients walking or strolling in the enclosure surrounding the building. The president of the synagogue, who was the most important Jew in our community, approached a man who was presumably a male nurse or intern, and inquired if the message had been received that a group of Jews from Sassmack was coming. He answered, "Yes." The most amazing thing was that fear, alarm or dread was not noticeable in the least in the group. As we were led into a large hall, the rabbi came in through an open door. He was a man in his late fifties, with a black beard mixed with gray. He wore a long black robe with a skull cap on his head. He wore glasses heavy with coloring. As he got closer, we could see his face was studded with blisters. He looked very pale and fatigued.

The group shook hands with the rabbi and exchanged the customary greetings, "Sholom Alaichem" (Peace be with you) and "Alaichem Sholom" (with you be peace). According to Jewish traditions, "if thy father is in captivity, thou must first ransom thy rabbi, and then thy father. The word of the rabbi is equal to the word of God." I too shook hands with that honorable rabbi in order that I might receive a blessing. I can still feel his soft, rather flabby hand, almost like cotton.

One Jew in our group gave a "krechtz" (deep sigh) as if to say, "the rabbi must have committed a capital transgression." Without any hesitation and in almost a scolding manner, my uncle stated it was a sin to probe the Bauraih (Creator's) motive or intentions with respect to that rabbi, or for that matter, respecting what may be happening in the life of any man. We must accept in faith whatever God has willed. He has willed for us a purpose which to Him is sufficient. We are ALL SPIRITUAL LEPERS and have nothing of which to boast. To that extent he was right.

One of my greatest griefs since my conversion as I

recall my uncle's statement has been that I did not have the opportunity to tell him and the others of that group in the town of my birth and youth that Jesus is the Mochiach (Messiah). He is the only one who can cleanse us from our spiritually leperous state.

During our half hour visit, the rabbi told us of his family left behind (a rabbi must be a married man to have a congregation) and much concerning his home community. Though isolated because of this loathsome disease, he manifested patience, friendliness and a submission to God's will and passionately pleaded for us to continue faithful to the "Torah" (the hand printed scroll of the five books of Moses, the most impregnable bulwark against the danger of disintegration). Although he was the only Jew among the patients, he said he was treated well considering the circumstances, and with respect by all. The rabbi's remarks made a deep impression on the hearts of the entire group who had visited him. Before departing, all wished him a speedy and complete recovery and the hope that his aspirations might be fulfilled.

After returning from the visit to the rabbi, the group gathered in the synagogue before the evening service and related in minute detail to the amazed congregation all that had happened. Everyone marveled at the rabbi's courage, fidelity and faithfulness without complaint.

My favorite uncle Rafael, who was mentioned before, was the "sandick" (godfather). I became the focal point in his life after my father passed away when I was about ten. I clung to him and he exerted an influence on my life comparable to that of my father.

When I reached the age of thirteen, I became "Bar-Mitzvah" (literally, son of the commandments). It also refers to confirmation, assuming responsibility in religious matters. According to the "Ethics of the Fathers," when a boy reaches the age of thirteen, he is to observe six hundred thirteen precepts. Certain prerogatives such as wearing

"Tfillin" (phylacteries) were deferred to the time of Bar Mitzvah. The quadrangular capsules of the Tfillin are made of the skins of animals described in the Torah (the five books of Moses) as clean animals and fit for Jewish consumption as food. They are spoken as "Shall-Rosh" (head phylactery) and Shell-Yod" (hand phylactery). Shall-Rosh consists of four compartments containing four separate strips of parchments on which are written four paragraphs from Ex. 13:1-10, 11-16, Deut. 6:4; 11:13-20. Shall-Yod consists of a single compartment containing the same four passages written in four parallel columns on a single piece of parchment.

The "Shemah" (Six Hebrew words in Deut. 6:4, translated, Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One) is in the capsules in the Tfillin. The Shemah symbolizes in graphic terms all that Judaism means. These words have been the battle cry of the Jews for centuries. I say this frankly, and it is a fact to this present hour, that no Biblical verse is more widely known and used than this passage of scripture. Every mother teaches it to her children as soon as they begin to lisp their first words. The Talmud tells the story how Rabbi Akiba, enduring the greatest torture while his flesh was being torn with an iron comb, pronounced the Shemah and died with the Shemah on his lips. It sweetens the last hours of dying.

My uncle gave me a little sack in which to keep the Tfillin. It was made of blue-satin (the color symbolized the sky and heaven). The sack was embroidered with silver on the "Mogain David" (Shield of David). It was very sacred to me. First, I cherished the privilege of worshiping God with it to which every Jewish boy eagerly and anxiously looks forward. Secondly, it was a most wonderful "Matoneh" (gift) considering what it contained. the most sacred and profound of scriptures, the Shemah. My pious and devoted uncle had a multiple purpose in mind; he wanted to remind me that I am a Jew, that I should strive to be faithful and observe the precepts which have protected and shielded

Jewish corporate identity, and should be aware of the privilege to wear the Tfillin at every week day morning service. Since my uncle was poor and carried a pack to support his wife and widowed mother, I was mighty proud of the sacred treasure which my uncle had purchased at great personal sacrifice.

Several years later, it was made known that I would immigrate to America where everyone wanted and dreamed to go; to a country of liberty, freedom, guaranteed protection against interference, the right to work, worship, etc. This meant no more persecution, no more "Cossacks" (fierce cavalry men, whom the author had seen plunder, torture and kill Jews).

When my uncle heard the news, he showed a mixed feeling of emotion, sadness and gladness. One of the clearest evidences of God's guidance was that I had received sufficient funds to cover my expense of coming to America from another uncle already in the United States. It was impossible to measure the importance of this step which was to prove unquestionably wise and constructive.

On the day of my departure, the summer sun shone brightly, no cloud was in sight. We went to the morning service at the synagogue. It was customary, for all to come and say good-bye, and wish anyone leaving for America or Africa a safe and peaceful journey. America seemed so far far away in those days. Several cried unashamedly because many, if not all of the elderly folk, realized they would never see me again.

The horse and wagon was ready, Reb Salmele (pet name for Solomon), the driver, was anxious to leave because we had a long journey to the train station, many miles away. I had all my belongings in a homemade suitcase filled with a few necessities, also my Hebrew prayer book and the Tfillin.

As the folk began to thin out, only my dearly beloved mother with her deepest affection for me, my brothers and a sister, uncles and aunts, cousins and Reb. Zalman Isaac (a

distant relative), who was a tailor, barber and sexton, a very fine and pious son of Abraham, remained to bid me the final goodbye. Reb. Zalman delighted to do a "Mitzva" (a good deed). However, it also has a different meaning, fulfilling a "religious obligation" or "commandment of God." Next to my beloved mother, it was hardest to say good-bye to my dear Uncle Rafael, who really acted as a father. Piety. dignity, and reverence enveloped his face as his eyes sparkled, focused on me.

My uncle came to me and asked emphatically if I owed any money to anyone or had done wrong to anyone. If I had, I probably would not have the opportunity or the occasion to make it right later, and should therefore correct these wrongs, committed in my relationship with my fellow man. He said, "although you are young, you must realize that life is uncertain at its best. Thus, a correction will be reasonably satisfactory to both who are involved." I replied, "I do not owe anyone, and I don't remember saying any unkind words to any of my "chavarim" (associates in school). Immediately, his face lit up, and joy was all over him. Then he asked, "have you got everything? Did you forget anything? I answered, "I have not forgotten anything."

In those days, very few pictures were taken, especially in small towns like ours. I am just thinking that it would have been interesting to take some pictures of the whole procession, the people, the horse and wagon, the driver, who was cheerful and had a strong sense of humor, and me the passenger, as it began to move toward the outskirts of our little town. Had pictures been taken, I would not have won the first prize. They were eventful moments.

I took my watch out of my vest pocket (that was the only thing that I had from my father and I prized it highly) and noticed the hands on the watch were moving rapidly, and that time was fleeting. By the look in my uncle's bright eyes, I sensed that he had something on his mind and that he would like to ask a last question as we were already mov-

ing rather slowly (the last question from a person is very important indeed). Quickly, I opened my suitcase (it did not have a lock) and took out the sack which contained the Tfillin, so that he and others could see it. The sun rays reflected from the silver decorated Mogan-David (Shield of David) on the sack. I could see his face light up and beam with joy as his eyes were riveted on the sack. That look told volumes. The Torah inherited and entrenched in my heart will always radiate powerfully and effectively. I kept it lifted up in my hand, like a palm branch toward heaven, until we were nearly out of sight. Then I turned and meticulously placed it back into my suitcase. My eyes moistened as I fully realized I would probably never see the little town of my birth again. During World War II, the inhabitants were killed and the town destroyed by the Nazis, making a return by a visitor impossible.

CHAPTER 6

VELLVELLUH

My oldest grandson Brian is deeply interested in history and geography. He shows special inclination in that branch of education. He has a bookshelf full collection of maps; some are worn out and dilapidated. When he studies geography, he always experiences a delightful and exciting time. When he looks at a map, he becomes deeply involved in that situation. For example, he pointed with pride and enthusiasm on a particular map to the little town of "SASSMACK" in Latvia where I was born and spent my boyhood; also the city of Libau, the port from which I sailed to America. Although young in age, he showed maturity and skill, and was quick to catch on to things. His vocabulary had a wide range, and when he encounters a key word that he does not understand, he is not frightened but asks for an explanation. He asked me to relate and give him a graphic description of my voyage across the vast ocean. So I told my lovely grandson that I would try to narrate to the best of my memory.

When I came to Libau, it was then the largest port on the Baltic Sea. It was a cosmopolitan city, next to Riga. For the first time I saw large ocean liners, ships, steamers, from all parts of the world anchored in the harbor. While awaiting passage, we were told that a ship with four smoke stacks was safer and more sturdy than a ship with one smoke stack and better able to withstand terrible storms. Other legends and fantastic stories were told to us in detail and caused our hearts to be gripped with fear and dread. The most frightening story was about the "WHALEFISH" (whale) which was depicted as able to capsize a ship and cause her to sink. Thus, the storm was nothing compared

to the whalefish that could crush a ship like a cream-puff or an egg-shell.

When it was made known that the ship on which we were to sail had only one smoke stack and was pointed out to us, we all gazed with amazement. Weeping and wailing broke out. A few protested and threatened not to board the ship but they soon changed their minds. It was a clear day. The mist which generally falls from the low skies dampening Libau's beautiful harbor, was not there. No fog arose to obscure our vision. As a rule, a thick haze enveloped the coastline so that it was most difficult to look very far out on the ocean. Most were excited and anxious for the moment to board the ship while a few hesitated to embark for America.

I vividly remember one Jewish man of middle age standing near me. Sweat stood out on his forehead and he began biting his fingernails, thinking of the perilous voyage aboard the ship wih one smoke stack. Others valiantly determined to remain brave; still others showed impatience. Two held telegrams presumably from parents, relatives or friends wishing them a "Bon Voyage." Before going down into the ships compartment toward our assigned places, several including the writer turned and stretched out our necks to look back at the harbor with its miles of docks, its water front with array of colorful shops of antiques, coffee-souvenir shops, tattoo places, casinos, etc. We wanted a last look at the old Gothic buildings noteworthy for their beauty, churches with fine architecture and the old magnificent synagogue. Some rushed not to be caught at the last moment; others were listlessly walking down to their assigned places on cots or double deckers. For the writer, this was my last time to see Libau and Latvia, the land of my birth or any part of Europe. It is now a shadow in my memory.

Seventy percent of the passengers were Jewish. Among them was a Jewess in her late forties with three small children. Her husband had preceded her by a year to Ameri-

ca. She was quite reserved, restrained in word and action, different from the rest. Even her children were very different, as they must have been reared in a strict Orthodox Jewish home.

The Jewish woman and her children were not in our compartment or section but were seen on deck from time to time while the sea was calm with her children clinging closely to her. The deck was studded with little iron posts and a chain forming a railing to help save the passengers from the danger of falling overboard. The thought of a fearful storm was brought to our minds when we were ordered to don our life preservers in a drill and everyone was thrown into a state of alarm.

Most of the time male and female (quite a few had their entire family with them) ate in the same "Kosher" (conforming with Jewish dietary laws) dining room. Although not elegant, it was clean. Halfway across the Atlantic while we were eating in the dining room, a strong hurricane hit. As the frightful storm intensified in all its fury, the high waves tossing our ship to and fro like a cork, practically all the passengers became sea sick. The ship heeled perhaps thirty degrees. The young who were not sea sick helped those who were. As the huge waves lashed against the ship, the boat would vibrate and quiver from the terrific shock. The young folk saw to it that everyone had their crude life preservers properly attached. Several Jews began to recite Psalms from memory as at any time it seemed the storm would break the ship apart.

As each hour passed, the tempestous storm became more turbulent and violent. Suddenly, the particular Jewess who was so shy and reserved, her children clinging closely, became frightened or panicked as did most of the passengers. With an agonizing cry, she began to call out, " 'O' VELL-VELLUH, O VELLVELLUH', (pet name for Will, or William, Bill) you who are such a great "TZADICK" (righteous, pious saint), I beseech you with urgency to intercede with

God that I and the children may weather this terrible storm and arrive safely and securely in America." She kept repeating 'VELLVELLUH' and spoke of him with great affection and awe. You could see that she was overwhelmed at that moment as she mentioned him whom she deeply loved and revered. The Jewess was carried away with religious ecstasy as she mentioned 'VELLVELLUH'. She further remonstrated, "you who are an eminent Talmudic scholar, greatly esteemed by all for your deep religious convictions, whose acts of 'TZDOKOH' (charity, lovingkindness) and simplicity), your 'MITZVAS' (good deeds) which have been recognized as outstanding in so much no one exceeds you in virtue. YOU, VELLVELLUH, intercede with the Almighty to alleviate our present suffering and consequent miseries."

Undoubtedly, there were others who had in their hearts and minds the same as that Jewish woman but they did not audibly implore the "TZADDIKIM" at whose feet some may have sat and drank deeply from the FOUNTAIN "TORAH HAKDOSHA" (Holy Law) and from the Talmudic lore, to plead their cause in the presence of the Almighty.

When the Jewess made an entreaty to 'VELLVELLUH', a hush fell upon them as panic seized them all in their nervous apprehension. All were intensely stirred at it was like a comforting link with the Holy One, Blessed be He! Some held to the cold iron columns in silence, eyeing each other as the ship rolled from side to side.

In a time of calamity, desperate distress, or when danger is threatening, the Jewish people of a community would go to the CEMETERIES and in concentration and awe prostrate themselves over the graves of "TZADDIKIM" (righteous, pious saints endowed with deep learning). They implored the souls of the departed "TZADDIKIM" to intercede with the Almighty that the calamity may come to nought and they be spared and protected. The Jews believed the heavens stood open before them as they spoke to God

and the Holy One, Blessed be He, spoke to them. They were not given to hallucinations. It was a dominant fact to them!

For example, when false or fabricated crimes were brought against the Jews, they would go to the burial places of famous rabbis whom they believed had supernatural power and knowledge, even the ability to perform miracles in behalf of revered ones or to stop the fiendish torture of their kinsmen, or perhaps to avert a massacre. They knew from past experience of the fury of fire and sword which sometimes awaited whole Jewish communities.

According to Jewish traditions, Caleb, one of the twelve men sent out by Moses, in the name of Jehovah, to search or spy out the land of Canaan, went to Hebron to the graves of the patriarchs, asking for their intercession in their undertaking. It is interesting to note that to this day, IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THAT WOMEN, BARREN AND INCAPABLE OF BEARING OFFSPRING, OFTEN VISIT THE GRAVES OF "TZADDIKIM" TO PRAY FOR CHILDREN. The writer witnessed that in Russia!

Despite the fervent appeals of the Jews for the help of VELLVELLUH, the storm did not abate (like in Jonah), but became more and more tempestuous. However, to our amazement and astonishment, an officer, perhaps two ranks below the captain, remained perfectly calm, composed, cool as if we were experiencing an "April shower." While everyone was driven to almost sheer madness with fright, this particular officer showed no worry, fright, terror or excitement whatsoever. He was asked, "how can you be so calm in a time of such distress? Don't you value your life since you are in the very prime of life? How can you remain so serene, quiet, peaceful and undisturbed?"

With a broad smile on his face, he answered, "In my cabin I have many valuable mottoes, souvenirs and other items acquired while sailing the seven seas during the past years. But I have something more valuable, precious and to

me priceless, a volume of the Bible. Here I find comfort, solace, assurance and peace. While this ship has a physical captain, I find in that volume a spiritual captain, (he did not quote Hebrews 2:10). While the ship has a physical anchor, I have A SPIRITUAL ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, a hope both sure and steadfast (he did not quote or mention Heb. 6:19)." He kept on saying that he was not afraid nor alarmed. He said, "even if the ship fails to reach the haven of New York, there is prepared a haven of rest in heaven which your forefather Abraham looked forward to, the Holy City which hath the foundation whose architect and builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10). He felt an ineffable glory of peace in his heart!

The officer spoke Swedish, Yiddish and German fluently and perhaps other languages also. He spoke to us in Yiddish since everyone in the group of Jews could speak it and most could understand German. He also said with delight, "I am going to my cabin and write a note to my wife and children in Sweden and will place it in a bottle and throw it into the ocean. If our ship goes down, perchance it will in time be washed ashore, be picked up and sent to my family. Thus, they will know what happened in my last hours."

To us Jews, it was like he was speaking in hieroglyphics. No one could understand as it was so fantastic. He seemed to be sparked by hallucinations and maybe manifest the symptoms of mental disorder. No one took him seriously as it occurs in persons who are frightened when at the gates of death to break down and say such things or act in such a manner.

When I consider here the Jewess who undoubtedly was raised in a strict orthodox Jewish home, and inhaled its spiritual atmosphere, I knew that every breath she took was saturated with things spiritual. From her remarks and exclamations, she must have been associated with pious Jewish folk, yet when danger threatened her and her children and she came face to face with possible death, she broke out with wild emotionalism, almost uncontrollable

(the same was true for other Jews who did not manifest their fright by outward demonstration). When Isaiah the prophet said in the name of the Lord, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee . . ." all us Jews on the ship took it very lightly and relegated these gripping compelling words to the junkpile as meaningless and worthless!

What a contrast and difference between us and the officer who took Jesus as his fortress, refuge, strength, peace and joy; who removes fears, dries up tears and visualizes the future! Undoubtedly the man whom the Jewess addressed as "VELLVELLUH" was a noble character, but he lacked the attributes of Jesus. Regardless of his honesty, integrity, veracity and station in life, if he was devoid of Jesus's uncompromising terms of man's salvation, he had nothing. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one cometh unto the Father except by me or through me." (John 14:6). He alone is the MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR, "Paraclete." Jesus also said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32).

CHAPTER 7

THERE IS A WAY WHICH SEEMETH RIGHT UNTO A MAN, BUT THE END THEREOF ARE THE WAYS OF DEATH. Proverbs 14:12

The above was penned by the wisest man who ever lived. It was not speculative wisdom. It is unqualifiedly inspired, and is welcomed by all faiths! Voluminous sermons have been preached and written on this verse. From the great abundance of his life, Solomon, is also known as "Koheleth" (the preacher), a towering personality unchallenged and unsurpassed in wisdom. There is a mass of interpretations in this Biblical text, hence some say, that they have chosen their interpretations which are absolutely correct! A common theory exists, that because a majority believe and endorse a theory then it must be correct, and that the majority must conform to their thinking and interpretations. This unhappy state of affairs exists, because, those that are blinded, have failed to analyze and compare for themselves if it be right or wrong! They feel that the theologians, thinkers and writers should not be censured or condemned considering their philosophy is incorrect, or shouldn't even be judged and criticized. Following such a course is not only fallacious, but complicates matters and makes them worse! While theology, dogmas, doctrine, ethics and creeds change and pass, the eternal truth, the "key" to every message changes not, notwithstanding that men have tried to change the course to suit their way of thinking. We must continue to bear witness to the "truth" which must be emphasized with the highest possible motive! Regardless of their emotion, ambitions, desires, and good intentions, they

are wrong and "honestly mistaken." Their perception is wrong. The spirit that prevails that they should not be criticized, is inconsistent. Many feel that they are fulfilling God's will, and doing His service, which "seemeth right unto" them. I think that the following simile will cause the above scripture to be illustrated and better understood. It will help to contribute to the purpose, as it grew out of some incidents connected with experiences which the writer is trying to explain. The central idea of the simile, is to show that my concept of "the way, that seemeth right," was wrong. Speculation is dangerous, especially in religious matters!

I saw a picture of an Orthodox Jewish teacher, teaching Jewish children. I remembered when I was a boy attending a "Thal-mud-Torah" (Hebrew School) in Russia. That teacher was a replica of my learned and pious teacher who tried to instill the principles of Judaism into our hearts. His sublime Jewish life manifested by his tremendous earnestness and flaming convictions touched us deeply. He emphasized "Kaddesh" (prayer for the dead) recited by mourners during the first eleven months after the death of a parent and on each anniversary thereafter. The reason my teacher put so much significance and importance I shall try to give here in a bird's eye view, as it would be too much to try to explain, if it can be explained at all!

In a Hebrew paper, a notice appeared that a famous Rabbi from Latvia died in Jerusalem. Latvia is the country of this writer's birth and youth. The Rabbi had escaped from Latvia when the German legions invaded and occupied that country during World War II. He finally reached Israel, but his two sons were killed along with the other six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. All the writer's family in Latvia did not escape the crematoria furnaces of the Nazi beasts. Having no sons, the Rabbi was left without a "Kaddesh" (a prayer for intercession for the dead parents). In Synagogue services, all Jews are equal. The rabbi is equal to any other

Jew. To be deprived of "Kaddesh" was a great calamity. (According to the Doctors of the Law, women are not permitted to participate in the holy function. This is observed among the Orthodox Jews). A Jew may live in a spiritual vacuum for a whole year but with great clarity and flaming devotion, recite "Kaddesh" in the Synagogue on the anniversary day of his parent's death.

So the Rabbi went immediately to an orphan home and searched for a boy who might resemble one of his sons, and adopt him so that, when he died, he would be provided with a "Kaddesh." Thus that sacred act would be carried out punctiliously, (Jewry believes that there is a redeeming virtue in the orphan's recital). Thus that very important wish was fulfilled. Of course one can hire the recitation "Kaddesh" and it is being done, but it is different when one's own sons say it. I fully realize it may seem surprising and even startling for a non-Jew to conceive of this as he is not able to feel the spirit of the Jews, or grasp the significant and tremendous weight and power which that magic word "Kaddesh" has upon the Jew. It is interesting to note, that, as the years pass by, it becomes more inspired with extraordinary meaning and deep feeling. To the Gentile world it is perhaps fantastic and the complicated ideas become almost incomprehensible.

After arriving in this country, I stayed with some friends in an eastern city, about a month. Then my uncle in the West sent me a ticket to come and stay with him. When I arrived in Cheyenne, Wyoming (the state where my beloved wife was born) I had to change trains. Somehow, the porters were not attentive in watching who got on the trains. I knew only a very few words in the English language, and of course could neither read nor write. My only baggage was a homemade suitcase, if it could legitimately be called a suitcase. Anyhow, it served very well its purpose, considering that my apparel consisted of very little. However, I did have something which I guarded very jealously, and that was

a little embroidered satin sack in which I kept my "Tfillin" (Phylacteries) worn on the left arm by Orthodox male Jews over the age of thirteen years during week day morning prayers, and also my prayer book.

The prayer book is the only thing that I still have. It is over 150 years old. Well preserved, as if it would have been published only ten years ago. I prize it very highly. It has been out of print many years. It has all the prayers for the High Holidays, the Psalms, the Ethics of the Fathers, prayer for the dead, etc. Perhaps, I am the only individual in America that possesses one. It is priceless! I treasure it as a keepsake. Thousands of brethren have seen it. It also has that famous prayer, every Jew says in the morning thanking God that he was not created a woman. "Blessed art thou, our God! King of the Universe who hath not made me a woman." Because of the "Tfillin" and Prayer Book I hung onto that little sack, and would not take my eyes off it!

When the conductor came around to collect tickets on this train, I handed him my ticket and resumed viewing of the fascinating scenery. However, he began looking at me and talking to me, but I paid no attention at all to his gesticulations which he started suddenly. After interviewing several passengers, he finally located a man who could speak languages other than English. After a few remarks, he tried in German, which I spoke (and still do). He patiently explained to me what the conductor was unable to make me understand. I WAS ON THE WRONG TRAIN. Instead of going west, I was going south, rapidly nearing Greeley, Colorado. I protested vigorously that I was going to my uncle, and that he sent me that ticket and would not deceive his nephew in this, therefore that I must be on the right train. ALAS! However, no amount of debate, arguing or discussing, could change the fact, that I was on the wrong train, going in the wrong direction. Although in my mind, "it seemeth right" that I was on the right train, I could never have reached my destination. The only way to reach my

destination, was to change trains and go the other direction. YES, I was "honestly mistaken."

Many conscientious and earnest folk are in the same situation which I was in, but in regard to something much more important, their eternal destination. They will have to change their course and follow the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION, who is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE. Human violation is bad enough, but to incur His dangerous displeasure is terrifying and frightening!

There was a famous violinist, truly a virtuoso. He was to start a concert engagement in a certain city. The advance sale of tickets, was greater than expected. The headlines of the advertisements of that renowned artist, told of his magic touch on the violin. No expense was spared, or anything was too great or too costly, to make his appearance a success. Enthusiasm was running high, and his name was on the lips of everyone. The patrons who formed the line, waited for hours to gain admittance before the curtain went up. The excitement was tremendous. The house was completely filled before he ever began to play.

When the curtain, ablaze with many beautiful colors, an impressive sight indeed, went up, and the artist appeared with his hundred thousand dollar Stradivarius violin, a tumultous applause greeted him. He began to play. The vast audience listened spellbound. After the performance, he received a fifteen minute ovation, and three curtain calls. He made an unforgetable impression with his playing. Suddenly, instead of his coming out to bow, and accept triumphantly a crown of laurels from the enthused audience, he paled and his eyes moistened. Tears began to roll down his cheeks, and in his bewilderment he exclaimed "I failed, I failed." The concert was not a success, but a failure. He stretched out his trembling hand, and pointed with his finger at a figure, and old gentleman, sitting in the royal box, "IIE DID NOT APPLAUD." The audience, as if with one accord, or voice, exclaimed vehemently in protest, "so what!"

as long as the world applauded you, why care, if the old man did not applaud you. What else is necessary? Is that not enough that the world expressed significantly their approval of three-curtain calls. ALAS! he further exclaimed, "BUT HE IS MY TEACHER!"

We see men of renown who are preaching to vast audiences, whose popularity is increasing by leaps and bounds, and whose radio programs are from coast to coast. The music, vocal and mechanical is claimed to be of the highest variety! It is emphasized that their success can only be described as phenomenal. Notwithstanding the loud acclamation of the world on their remarkable success, and of the increasing demands for their appearances in various parts of the world where great throngs await them, "What really counts?"

I have not written in a spirit of reproach upon anyone's life, character, reputation, behavior, or habits. But I feel that this chapter could well be called "Honestly Mistaken" and I hope it will cause someone to discover his errors of yesterday, and thus obtain new light for today and tomorrow.

Let us continue to gather around HIM, and follow HIM. Although the path may be narrow, and rugged, it is safe and profitable, not only in this life, but in the LIFE to come.

CHAPTER 8

WHY?

After my conversion from Judaism to Christianity, I had an experience never to be forgotten. I moved in the home of a young couple. Each was very devoted to the other and spoke to each other with the tenderest words of love. It was real love, not a disguise. Love should be allowed to be spontaneous in both parties, and they should respond fervently to each other.

This couple had been blessed with a little boy. They poured out their love for him as he was the center of their lives. He was a loveable, playful child, with radiant blue eyes. He would capture the heart of everyone. His parents lavished unmixed and unmeasured love upon him. They were unselfish in their life, and put Christ first in everything. The true character of God was known to them and appreciated. They were carried away with the love of God which provided such wondrous redemption, Jesus, the blessed lamb of God. Their service was not grudging. It was honest and in accord with Christian teaching. Good intentions are not enough; they must find fulfillment in effective Christian service.

Their home was a foretaste of heaven. They endeavored to bring him up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," realizing their responsibility to God. As parents, they had a commission to guide and protect their offspring. They were esteemed by friends and neighbors for their deep religious convictions. They were not driving themselves relentlessly, exhausting themselves over useless details, as is unfortunately being done by so many religious people.

I was only a babe in Christ even though I was mature physically. Yet I knew something of the problems, distress and suffering of life. As a young Christian from another religion, I was indelibly impressed by their lives which were so different; they sought to live "soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world."

It was a wonderful Christian home! The home is the foundation of all piety and morals! The marriage relationship demands faithfulness in adversity as well as in prosperity, in sickness as in death. Literally translated, Genesis 2:24 is "and they shall be one flesh," truly a sacred oneness of man and woman united through the holiness of God. Love and understanding satisfy the hunger of the heart as nothing can. A man and wife genuinely share interest in each other. That warmth and feeling, the desire of the highest joy, presents a satisfaction under any circumstances.

I was treated as one of their relatives. Their friendship toward me was not on their lips, but out of their hearts. I was not eavesdropping, but I observed from day to day that their lives were impregnated with the highest ideals Christianity manifests. They strengthened and stimulated my faith to walk the larger life.

Suddenly a cloud overshadowed their beautiful and lovely home. One day, I came home from work expecting the customary greeting of my little friend. I had become very fond of him and played with him a great deal. Instead, his pale father greeted me and explained that his little son was taken ill suddenly and was gripped by a violent fever. The doctors fought desperately to save him, and everything was done humanly speaking, but it was of no avail. Pneumonia set in, complications arose, and before the week ended he died!

The inexpressible grief and sorrow which enveloped their hearts was terrible. The vacancy left in their hearts and home could not be filled. In their deep sorrow and agonizing grief, they cried, lamented and exclaimed, "we see children in the street without protection that even livestock would

have received, yet they stay well and strong, while our dear child who had the best watchful care and attention, had to fall victim of pnuemonia and die." They kept saying, "why, why, why?"

It affected me deeply and I tried to realize their blow to the fullest extent of my capacity, as I was not married. My first reaction under such circumstances was to say or do something to help comfort them and relieve the terrible weight upon their bleeding hearts. Regardless of what may happen or take place, our belief in God should not be undermined or shaken by a great calamity.

I tried to remind them that separation is only for a "little while," till that wonderful and thrilling handclasp and embrace! Proving that the little one is precious in His sight was very vividly demonstrated when Jesus said, "it were better that a man should have a millstone about his neck and be drowned in the sea than to tempt one of them." They were not eternally separated from their precious little one! A clear reflection reveals that he is "with Christ" which is far better. Therein is sure comfort and consolation. But they kept on asking, "why, Brother Eckstein, why?"

In answer to this insistent question, I related to them a remarkable narrative found in Hebrew literature. Rabbi Mayer, a great renowned sage who was versed in the Old Testament, Talmudic and Rabbinic literature, went to the synagogue on a "Shabboth" (Sabbath) to "Mincho" (vesper service) to deliver a "Droscho" (a learned sermon or religious lecture). His disclosure which was interwoven with "Yeerch" (reverence, not fear of God) made a lasting impression upon the audience which listened intently. He spoke until "Mairiv" (the third daily prayer, when the first star appeared—Jews cannot pray unless stars are in the heavens). Between "Mincho" and Mairiv" is about two hours. During that time the famous rabbi's only child died suddenly. The mother took the child without bitterness and frustration and carried him into the room of the man of

God, laid him upon a couch, and covered him with a white linen sheet.

After "Mairiv" when Rabbi Mayer came home from the Synagogue, as was his custom, he greeted his wife with the salutation "Gooth Voch" (have a good week). Then he asked where his beloved child was so that he might bestow his blessing upon him. She answered, "he is probably in the next room." According to the prescribed precepts of the traditions, his wife brought wine and a goblet for him to say the "Havdala Ceremony." "The Yalkut" (collections, the names of various collected interpretations and explanations of Biblical passages) comments that "Odom Horishon" (the First Adam or First Man) was created on Friday. His hands did not have any fingers, only the thumbs, because when Adam was in "Gan-Eden" (Garden of Paradise or Garden of Pleasure) he did not have to work. He was driven out of the "Gan-Eden" after he sinned. The "Shabboth" is ushered in Friday evening. However, at the conclusion of the "Shabboth" (Saturday) when Adam started to till the earth, his hands cracked or split, and were turned into fingers with nails. Therefore, on "Moutzaih-Shabboth" (at the conclusion of the Sabbath, Saturday night when one can begin to work) the "Havdala Ceremony" is recited. A special benediction is said over the goblet filled with wine.

I remember when my father came from the Synagogue that he used to take a goblet, fill it with wine, take a yellow wax candle, light it, and with consecrated supplication thank the "Hakodesh Boruch Hu" (the Holy One Blessed Be He) for His goodness and loving kindness and for giving us fingers with nails! The writer remembers vividly how he held that ornamented wax candle (used for that occasion only) while my father filled the goblet with wine, closed one hand making a fist, placed in near the candle so that its light might shine upon his finger nails, and how he would look with such "Yeerch" (reverence) upon his fingers and nails. Then he would switch the goblet to the other hand, and

go through the same procedure with the same tremendous earnestness and zeal as he carefully examined the fingers. The burdensome traditions are unreasonably oppressive. Peter expressed it correctly, "neither our fathers, nor we are able to bear them" (Acts 16:10). After the "Havdala Ceremony" the Rabbi asked his wife again, "where is our child?" She replied, "surely he will come soon," and began preparing food for her husband. He washed his hands and prayed, ate, and prayed again thanking God for His mercy, goodness, loving kindness and graciousness! Rabbi Mayer was a good man and his love for his family and fellowman was well known.

After the prayers showing humility and great respect for his scholarship and deep piety even though he was her husband, the wife said, "Rabbi, I would like to ask you a "Shailoh" (a question) which is of profound importance." Rabbi Mayer said, "Ask!" She began, "four years ago someone gave me something to keep. But today, he came suddenly and asked me to give back that precious gift. Rabbi, the "Shailoh" I want to ask you is shall I give it back, or shall I not?" Without any hesitation, the Rabbi emphatically replied, "by all means you must give it back to him. You should not have thought it necessary to ask that question." She remarked that without his consent, she did not wish to return it. She asked him to come with her into the other chamber, and led him into the other room. Without hysteria, she drew back the white linen sheet. Immediately, he noticed that his only little child was dead. As a loving and devoted father he was profoundly shocked and broke down and began to weep. He, like we, was aware of life's preciousness! Then his wife said, "Rabbi, you told me only a few moments ago very explicitly, if someone gives you something to keep, when he comes back for it, by all means, without any hesitation you MUST immediately return it." How many times did I hear you recite the sacred and awe inspiring scripture, "Thou shalt love the Lord God with all they soul,"

which means even if He takes your life from you. Sublimated into spiritual consecration, she said, "Jehovad Boruch" (Blessed Be He). God gave the soul to our child, and now God has taken it back from the child. God gives and God takes. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Although the story, is very impressive, there is something that is far more transcending. When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" it makes the "twice born" ones look forward to something. Likewise, HE said, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy" because "I live ye shall live also." How thrilling is this anticipation!

That child did not reach the age of accountability. Regarding such, Jesus spoke these gripping and compelling words "for of such is the kingdom of heaven!" To be bereaved of a dear one who is flesh of flesh and bone of bones, its painful indeed, but so long as God remains the Fountain of mercy to us, we are consoled, strengthened, and stabilized. The brilliance of the precious diamond is more clearly seen when black foil is behind it! As sure as Jesus who is the Head of the Body lives, so will also we the members live! Jesus had made his life the life of His people. In due time He will take us up to dwell with Him above, if we strive to follow Him here below! The path may be rough and narrow, but it is a safe and sure one! A lot in the heavenly Canaan, to be clad in immortality, and forever be satisfied awaits the faithful!

The parents, in their grief by the irreparable loss, were now uplifted, comforted and consoled with divine relief! Now they felt His peace which partially enabled them to see "why." "Not my will, but thine be done" became clear and satisfying. Undoubtedly the word of God, which is life and power, had the convincing influence that they would see their dear one in that great DAY of transformation when faith shall be turned into sight and we shall be with Him and be LIKE HIM, eternally!

CHAPTER 9

THE PEEPING RABBI

Among Jewry circumcision is one of the most sacred rites that a Jew is commanded to observe. In fact the observance of this commandment take precedence over any other commandment. During the history of the Jews, their oppressors decreed death for the observance of circumcision. Very few Jews bowed obediently to crush and trample their sacred precepts. Those who resisted were scourged and put to death. Many Jews lived and died for that Holy Covenant God made with their forefather Abraham. Under tyranny, they were known to observe circumcision in catacombs, caverns, hollowed out chambers in the earth, and caves; the observance gave them new hope and courage to withstand cold steel. They also retreated into mountains and into the underground to keep the covenant of circumcision. Never has "Brith Millah" (circumcision) been modified in any way. No expulsion, massacre, inquisition, or pogrom has been able to tear them away from that sacred rite. In spite of such persecutions, it is being practiced by the Jewish people to the present day. The Jews believe that Circumcision has helped them to survive, giving them a source of courage hope and life.

A non-Jew wanting to embrace Judaism must be strongly discouraged from doing so. It should be pointed out to him, the extent of hatred that exists against the Jews. He should understand that he must take upon himself the burden to abide by and punctiliously observe the famous "Taryag-Mitvath" (613 positive and negative commandments). Finally, he must give serious thought to the reality that he will

have to submit to the ritual of CIRCUMCISION before he can be brought into the Hebraic fold. Three rabbis are required to be present as witnesses when the ritual is performed. Prior to the ceremony, the candidate must receive instruction in the Jewish religion and repudiate certain Christian dogmas, concluded by reciting "Shema Yisroail, Adonai, Elauhaia, Adonai Echod" (Hear , O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord). Deuteronomy 6:4. (This verse will be explained in the latter part of this chapter.) His name is changed to Abraham. (Romans 2:23-29.)

Any Gentile woman who wishes to adopt the Jewish religion, also must be discouraged as much as possible. Before bringing her into the Hebraic fold the rabbi must try to make her conversion as difficult as possible. She will be asked the question, "what induced you to take the difficult step?" Desecrating the Holy Sabbath is a capital transgression, and according to the Law of Moses is "Skillo" (stoning to death, Numbers 15:32-26).

The candidate is solemnly reminded of the obligations she is accepting, that of having to keep a 'kosher house.' Kosher originally meant fit or proper. Later it took the meaning of fit, permitted in contradistinction to 'posul' (rejected) and 'terefah' (unfit, forbidden) or which vessels for food are made ritually fit for use. Orthodox Jews conform by eating only 'kosher' foods. In order to soften meat before it is salted, so as to allow the salt to extract the blood more freely, the meat is soaked in water for about half an hour. It is covered with salt for about an hour, then washed three times. Meat and dairy food must neither be eaten nor cooked together. It is religiously forbidden to derive any benefit from such a mixture. The mere thought is revolting and nauseating. After eating meat, one should wait six hours before eating dairy food. Kosher is generally applied to things and persons that meet Jewish religious requirements and for the most part used in the sense of food 'ritually clean and edible.' The "Schochet" (the authorized slaughterer),

slaughters animals and poultry in accordance with Jewish religious rituals. Jews eat the forequarter but not the hindquarter. The Law of Moses strictly prohibits eating meat from a cloven hoofed animal which does not chew the cud, (Leviticus 11:26). Hence, a kosher menu completely omits pork.

The word PORK brought back to my memory a rather humorous incident. I married a young lady who combined beauty, and intelligence with spirituality. As a groom of two weeks, I proudly displayed my bride in Allen, Kansas where we spent our honeymoon. While there, I conducted cottage meetings for several weeks. As newlyweds and ones who proclaimed Christ, we were invited out for meals frequently in this farm community. I remember vividly that in the first home to which we were invited, the good lady of the house said, "Brother Eckstein, you do not have to fear with regard to the meat, IT IS NOT PORK, but good choice beef! You do not eat pork, do you?" I said, "Yes, I eat pork!" She exclaimed, "You do?" I replied, "Of course I do, since I embraced Christianity." She spoke up, "we all thought that you would not eat pork!" You guessed it—for the next two weeks where ever we were invited out to dinner, we had pork!

It is interesting to note that a Jew is prohibited from placing kosher and non-kosher fresh meats and poultry side by side. In order to keep a kosher house, the proselyte housewife would have to try to conform to the rules and regulations of the Jewish Law. So the whole process designated by the term 'kosher' means to keep a kosher house.

She is also solemnly reminded that she will have to observe 'Nidah' (woman passing through her menstrual state or period). The rabbi who instructs her must be married and explain nidah to her without any embroidery or excitement. When a woman is in her period, or state, she is prohibited from having sexual intercourse. According to the doctrine of the sages, sexual intercourse at this time is classed as prostitution, and the penalty for violation is 'Koresch' (ex-

termination). The rabbi further stresses that for the husband and wife to touch each other, by pressing the lips together, in loving embrace, even tenderly, to softly caress each other, or to talk of things that would arouse and stimulate passion, so that it would burst into a flame, which would lead to the intimate relationship, is strictly forbidden! It is also directed to her attention that she and her husband cannot sleep in the same bed during menstruation. Often times the heart and head travel different paths. Therefore, the rabbis try to impress upon the women the tremendous seriousness of conforming to the precepts.

As it has been emphasized in the early part of the chapter, the proselyte must be circumcised in the presence of three rabbis as witnesses. The presence of three rabbis is also required as the woman immerses herself for conversion though due precautions are taken not to affront the woman's modesty. She is instructed preceding the ceremony or rite of immersing herself in the 'mikvah' (an accumulation of water). Complete immersion is used for both male and female. The 'mikvah' not only serves as ritual, but has also another purpose; it is a medium for good health, and it is very pleasant. (The writer has experienced many times the pleasure of going to the 'mikvah.')

As a rule, an elderly pious Jewish woman takes the proselyte to the "Mikvah." At home in Russia, the "Mikvah" was in a room with a wooden floor containing a wooden bench. In an earnest voice, the aged Jewess asks the proselyte to take off all her clothes. She is instructed to take off rings and ear rings if she is wearing any. Any cotton in the ears must be removed, even bandages that can be removed without harming a flesh wound. She must clip her fingernails and toenails in order to remove as much foreign matter as possible. She was ordered to comb her hair thoroughly so that no knot would be encompassed by the water. The knots must be removed in order that nothing insulate her from coming in contact with the water!

The immersion must take place in the daytime. The ceremony of her conversion cannot take place on the Sabbath or on a holiday. The candidate must comply submissively with the traditions, doctrines, and commandments of men.

As the woman enters into the room for the RITUAL IMMERSION OF HERSELF, the door to the "mikvah" is left open just a crack, so the three rabbis standing outside of the door near the crack could hear the splash as she breaks the surface of the water. We do not know if any of three rabbis were "peeping" through the crack in the door. While rabbis too are human, with tenderness and appetites, there was a possibility, that they might have been "peeping."

After the ceremony of immersing herself in the "mikvah," the candidate repudiates certain Christian dogmas and concludes by reciting or repeating the "Shema" in the Synagogue or Temple before the open ark of the covenant where the Torah, the Holy Scrolls containing the five books of Moses are kept. Why is so much emphasis placed upon the "Shema" and why is it recited with such deep reverence, esteem, flaming devotion, and sacredness? "Shema" literally means to "hear" or "listen." It is the first word in that all embracing passage of scripture, "Hear O, Israel, the Lord our God is one God." (Deut. 6:4). Among the Jews, regardless of whether they are Orthodox, Conservative, or Reformed, this scripture has attained more importance than any other passage. Every Jew knows the "Shema" in Hebrew by heart. It would be unnatural for a Jew to say it without ecstasy. Some, when they recite it, are gripped with such emotion that they lose self control. This could be said of my pious rabbi (teacher). The writer has seen him in such a state many times. The "Shema" can be summed up as the entire basis of the Jewish religion.

"Shema" is repeated by Jews in their daily prayers. The potentially devout and observant Jew, and the Jew who is not so punctilious in observing "Taryag-Mitvoth" (613 laws)

say it with the same veneration, mingled with awe! The sacredness to both is indescribable. It is also the first prayer learned by a child and the last prayer uttered before death! When a Jewish soldier is in battle at the gates of death, the Jewish chaplain will utter these words.

During the first World War when my older brother was in France with the United States army, his platoon charged a German trench, they heard an enemy soldier exclaim "Shema Yisroail" in Hebrew, throw up his hands and surrender. Of course a Jewish soldier from the Allies would also know its meaning. Hence, a soldier was saved from death.

When a Jew is in mortal danger, he will unconsciously exclaim, "Shema Yisroail." It presents not only words alone, but manifests that he accepts infinite reality, the past, present, and future in one thought which melts into the eternal truth that he believes in "one" ONLY GOD who was, is, and ever will be. Thus, he has reached his goal, united with all Israel, as it is written in "The Ethics of the Fathers" (Kol Yisroail yeish lohem chailek loaulom haboh"—All Israel have a portion in the future world as is said, and thy people shall all be righteous). He was able to fulfill the commandment that he worshipped the ONE GOD. It can be said without qualification that the tenant of Deut. 6:4 has been firmly observed. Very rarely will a Jew veer from the "Shema."

Generation after generation of Jews has died with the Shema upon their lips. During Hitler's reign of cruelty and ruthless passion to murder, countless Jews, while suffering torture and agony in death, uttered as their last words, Shema Yisroail. (Six million Jews, men, women and children were murdered by the Nazis. One shudders as they made sport of suffering and death). So we can see the profound importance and deep siginificance which this bird's eye view of Shema gives.

The real meaning and intent of Shema is to emphasize that the Jews do believe in only ONE GOD, thereby re-

pudiating belief in Jesus, the Mochiah as the "Son of God." They say it is blasphemy to believe in a plurality of a God!

We do not know any Christian who would want to cancel the importance of any portion of Scripture because we know the Holy Spirit said that all Scripture is given by "inspiration. . . ." However, we would like to counter attack and examine as closely as possible that verse of the Shema. Conscious of the fact that the main weight, importance and emphasis is laid upon the word "ONE" in that particular verse, we shall try to probe the full meaning of the word "One." The Jewish precepts and practices are one, and TRUTH demands that we endeavor to correct their faulty explanations.

In "Shema Yiaroail Jehovah Elouhainu Jehovah Echod," the word "ONE" in this verse is the Hebrew word "Echod." There are two words in the Hebrew that have the same root which means "ONE." These are "Echod" and "Yochid." The word "Echod" translated one, expresses and contains the thought of unity! It frequently has the idea of TWO persons but ONE IN THOUGHT, ACTION, AND EXPRESSION. Gen. 2:24. literally translated is AND THEY SHALL BE TO ONE FLESH," "Echod." In every respect, they were to be one, two persons with one plan and purpose. The Hebrew word "Yochid" is used in the absolute sense of aloneness, singleness, individuality. The most pointed example in Scripture may be when God said to Abraham, "Kaach Joh Es Binchoch es Yechecho" (take now thy son, thine only, or only one son.) This expression is not used when referring to God. For instance, "Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." The word in this verse (ONE) is (Echod), not "Yochid." Here again we have strong proof of the presence of Christ with God, before the word was, AND AS ONE IN THE GODHEAD!

After the mikvah, the candidate is informed that her original name has been changed to "Rochel Bas Avrohom" (Rachel, the daughter of Abraham). She is told that her

name has been written in the Temple, or Synagogue ledger and placed in the archives. Then she is given a certificate, certifying she has met all the requirements prescribed by the rabbis, and is congratulated. However, in case earthquakes, floods, hydrogen bombs, etc, destroy all public records, even her name is chiselled on granite, yet it goes to ashes and waste crumbled to dust.

Now with regard to issuing a certificate, it brings to our mind something that is for ETERNITY. A great storm of persecution broke upon the early Christians through the action of Saul of Tarsus. Many were scattered and others yielded to the compulsion to defame the name of Jesus. Not a few Christians were cast into prison, and even condemned to death on account of his blind hatred for Jesus. On the way to Damascus, Saul was conquered by the loving kindness and matchless grace of the Lord Jesus and became the disciple Paul. This is the most remarkable of all changes that a man undergoes. Peter went around to places in Judea in order to ascertain the havoc caused by the terrible persecution and to reassemble brethren, encouraging them and strengthening those "Walking IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." There were those then as now who were determined to serve the Lord, even at the cost of dear ones. (The writer has experienced grim persecution) relatives, friends, yea, even life itself.

Peter also went to Joppa. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha which means Dorcas or Gazelle; this woman was full of good works and acts of charity. (Acts 9:36). She was very beautiful and her life and character deeply impressed souls. It was ten years after the resurrection of our Lord that this part is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Therefore, we can perceive that such an energetic, wonderful soul as Tabitha must have gone to Jerusalem in order to learn about and know the renowned prophet of Nazareth. She heard HIS WORD as Mary did; it

found lodging in her heart and gave her light. She became a disciple by embracing the faith of Christ and being baptized into Him.

The atmosphere was tense with apprehension as the persecution of the disciples intensified. Hence it was dangerous to be a follower of Christ, and certainly required great boldness and fortitude to be His disciples. Christ Himself had been the object of wrath from the religious groups who had slandered, hated and crucified Him. But Tabitha was not intimidated. She was prepared to follow Jesus regardless of the consequences. She, like Peter, could say to Jesus, BEHOLD, WE HAVE FORSAKEN ALL TO FOLLOW THEE. Tabitha was a Christlike personality and full of the Holy Spirit. This union with God was the outgrowth of a surrendered life so identified with Him as to be completely His in life and purpose!

The Holy Spirit says that "TABITHA WAS FULL OF GOOD WORKS." Her soul was full of love for God and man; hence, her time was filled with works of piety. She had faith, a LIVING FAITH. "Tabitha fell sick and died." There in a house full of holiness and usefulness, service and sacrifice, a place of heavenly light, came sickness, suffering and death. Also to others of God's dear children come sickness, pain and death. Here we walk by faith, not by sight!

Though Tabitha was a devoted, active person in the town of Joppa, we do not find a monument, a marble tablet or a street named after her. God erected a monument for her in that ETERNAL CITY, thus memorialized forever! Yes, Tabitha, a name was changed too, but her name was not written on a ledger in a Synagogue, but in the LAMBS BOOK OF LIFE, AND EMBLAZONED ON THE ESCUTCHEON OF THE ALMIGHTY. (Jesus changed the name of Simon, son of John to Cephas, which means Peter. John 1:42.)

We would like to remind you here that proselytes who are given certificates when three rabbis witness the ritual

circumcision, or when three rabbis stand near the door open just a crack to hear or peer at the female proselyte splash in the water as she immerses herself, will not assure her of "Aulom-Habo" (Eternal Life). Nor will the changing of names to "Ben-Avrohom" (son of Abraham) or "Bas-Avrohom" (daughter of Abraham) profit them anything. Eternal life is only for those whose names are written in the LAMBS BOOK OF LIFE! His love and grace are marvelous in our eyes!

CHAPTER 10

SCHMAD

After coming to Dallas, Texas and not having a Hebrew Mission where Jews might come and discuss the deeper things of life, I endeavored to approach Jews on the streets, in parks or wherever I had the opportunity. In the course of time, I met several preachers and became their good friend. Through them, I had calls from nearby towns to come and speak on Sundays. Sometimes, owing to transportation problems (in those days there were no buses and few automobiles), it was necessary to leave sometimes on Saturday in order to reach my destination by Sunday.

I remember vividly the first call I received. It was from my very good friend, elder E. H. McElroy of Heidenhamer, a small community with a strong church. He warmly welcomed me at the train depot at Temple.

When I arose to speak, I immediately felt perfectly at home among these brethren and sisters. I tried to present a lesson in a very effective manner, and it was appreciated by a good audience which listened with marked attention. The folks were full of zeal and enthusiasm, and imbued with great faith. Faith is an integral part of Christian religion. The people endeavored to spread Christianity among the folk in the community. This group of simple Christians had love in their hearts for the salvation of souls. As they did not have a regular preacher, brother McElroy and others mighty in the scriptures brought the lessons. Thus, I was invited several times a year.

While there one time, I met a brother from a small town in Oklahoma who was visiting. He asked me to come and

speak there and indicated they would pay my train fare and keep me over the weekend. I thanked the brother for the invitation and promised I would come later, and bear witness for Christ, my blessed redeemer who hung in agony on the tree for me. Several weeks passed before I had an opportunity to go.

While there, I made my home with one of the elders. He told me that he had come from Kentucky in a covered wagon. He talked about their forthcoming tent meeting with my good friend brother Gus Dunn from Dallas, one of four brothers, all preachers of the gospel. All later spoke in our Hebrew mission. I recall when Gus Dunn held a meeting at the old Garrett Avenue Church of Christ, brother E. M. Crockrell said to me, "Bro. Eckstein, I counted seventy-nine scriptures he quoted by memory." I am satisfied he was correct.

I spoke at the little town in Oklahoma Sunday morning and evening. We went to the elder's home and after supper a man connected with the law came in, said he heard me speak even though he was not a member of the church of Christ, and he liked it very much. Then he and the elder related to me a weird, sordid and amazing event which had happened in their community. As they talked, I could see that they were in bewilderment. After hearing me speak they were attempting to recapitulate the grim story and summarize the principle points.

There was a Jewish family who operated a general store, the only store in the community. The man had the confidence and respect of everyone for his integrity and honesty. He was a strict Orthodox Jew who had immigrated from Russia, and brought with him the traditions, and maxims of the rabbis which he said he inherited from his forefathers. He wore a beard and no razor came upon his face. He was truly a pious son of Abraham.

He used to pray three times daily. A "Tallith" (prayer shawl) is worn by a Jewish male from the age of thirteen

during the daily morning service. They are not worn on Sabbaths and festivals. Before beginning his prayers, the worshipper pronounces this benediction: "Blessed art thou who has sanctified us with these commandments, and commanded us to enwrap ourselves in the fringed garment," (prayer shawl, Numbers 15:38-39). and also phylacteries, a square leather box, containing slips on which are written scriptural passages. Two such boxes are worn, one on the head and one on the left arm during week day MORNING PRAYER (Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:3,9; 11: 13-20).

The Jew was never seen in his store, neither on the street or in any public place without a hat. In his home he wore a skull cap so as to never have an uncovered head. According to the tradition of the elders, it is not permissible to even venture out four yards with an uncovered head. The penalty for disobedience is very severe.

The elder and man said the Jew had a fine library, presumably the Talmud, and also religious books of holy men. Undoubtedly that pious Israelite must have been a great lover of sacred literature. He was well liked as a charitable man. A righteous man must also be a philanthropist. (Strangely, there is no Hebrew word for charity. The word righteous "Tzadick" has the connotation charity, beneficient.)

The Jewish couple had a son who attended an Eastern college and a daughter in high school. She chummed with non-Jews, because there were no Jews with whom to keep company. She used to go with various Gentile friends to their homes, parties, etc. As boys and girls went together, there arose a deep friendship between the Jewish girl and a Christian boy. As the weeks and months passed, it blossomed into love. She was invited by the boy to visit with him in that small church. Whenever she and her boyfriend visited the elder, he taught her. She also heard teaching when attend-

ing services. But of much more significance was the boy who was strong in the faith and knew that the New Testament everywhere emphasized that we must endeavor to lead souls to Christ. He talked to her considerably.

Although her parents knew for sometime that she was going with a non-Jewish boy, and was even attending church services, to which they vehemently objected and furiously protested, it was all to no avail. Then the crisis came.

One day, she came home from school and told her parents that she was contemplating becoming a Christian. In fact, she was going to be baptized the following Sunday. Notwithstanding her pious parents terrible opposition, she informed her boyfriend on Saturday evening that she was going to be baptized the next day.

Shortly after midnight, a neighbor heard knocking at his door. He arose and saw that it was the wife of the Jewish merchant saying that a burglar had broken into their home and something very terrible had happened to their daughter. They immediately went out into the rainy night to the Jewish home where they found the girl dead in her bedroom with her throat cut. The father was standing there with a raincoat on. The window was open in her bedroom where they said the robber had climbed in and murdered her. Immediately, they contacted a doctor and the law.

After much investigation, the law was unable to uncover any clue to that "robber." No foot prints had been left outside the window nor in the house. How could it be possible to gain entrance without noise and leave no marks or foot prints? The Jewish couple could not explain it. When asked why the father had on a rain coat, he said he put it on and went out to look for the assailant.

After questioning them at length, no clue or motive for the killing could be found. The authorities were confronted with a major puzzle in that case. They talked with the girls' friends, neighbors, employees at the store, cus-

tomers who traded there, teachers, etc., but none could give any information or shed any light on why anyone would want to kill the girl.

The elder and lawman further related that the son came home from college immediately, the father sold the store and some other property and left at once never to be seen or heard of again. There was no explanation for the family's departure. There was much speculation but no positive answer. That savage murder remained shrouded in mystery.

After hearing me speak, the whole situation took on a different meaning. Some folk thought that it might have been the deeply religious father who did it, not a robber. Others however, notwithstanding the physical evidence which seems to have pointed to that strict Orthodox Jewish father, could not bring themselves to believe that he would do such a terrible thing—to kill his own daughter so as to prevent her from being baptized.

Only the other day, fifty years after the ghastly deed related had happened, I was out laboring in the gospel of Christ among the Jewish people. A Jew said that it would be very interesting to hold an autopsy and explore my brain to find out what made me change my religion. "You changed your religion for selfish purposes, and not from conviction. An autopsy would reveal it!" I replied, "No searching of my physical body would reveal anything. The searching convicting Spirit of God who is not visible to human eyes, but to God only brought about the change in me."

I could report many Jews who are interested and some even attend church services, but would under no condition submit to "Schmad" (baptism). Memories of countless Jews who suffered pain, torture and death flash across their minds. They recall how many faced the gruesome choice during the Inquisition of "Schmad" or to be burned at the "Auto-De-Fe." The mere mention of "Schmad" kindles new fires of ancient conflagration. The above is abundantly

substantiated by history and its authentic evidence witnessed by many.

I know it is rather hard to realize such a strange philosophy really can exist. One will say that such a religious system was practiced in the "horse and buggy days." I respectfully take issue. The abhorrent, detestable hate of the Jews for "Schmad" has not changed. On the contrary, antagonism, opposition and resistance has immeasurably increased. Perhaps the casual reader may conclude that we are exaggerating or overstating the case. He might state that our observation fits the Old Country but not the modern world with its scientific marvels. Who would want to bother with such insignificant, moldy, musty spiritless subjects as were believed in the early days?

In these days of crisis and communism, crime and infidelity, men of renown are speaking to vast audiences but fail to touch upon the key, the nerve center, that a believer must be baptized into Christ. "Every man shall revere his mother and father, and you shall keep my sabbaths." (Leviticus 19:3). The Hebrew word for man (Ish) is plural, pointing to both sexes. If one is ordered by a father or mother to desecrate the sabbath, he is not to obey. THE WILL OF THE PARENTS MUST RETREAT BEFORE THE WILL OF GOD!

My eldest son, Stephen, talked to a young Jew who told him that his father urged him to commit suicide rather than to be baptized. After hearing the grim story, frankly, I was not surprised at all. Looking back at history of the bloody atrocities, whole volumes have been written because they would not submit to "Schmad," BAPTISM. Of course I am fully aware that not many others will resort to that horrible unreasonable act, as it was thought that pious Jew perhaps did, but they will equally resort to mourning for one DEAD, and rend "keriah" their garments at least one handbreadth, and disinherit the baptized one, leaving them one dollar

in order to comply with the law of the land which requires them to do so. He is branded as a deserter who has forsaken his people, and is thought to despise the vile being who has forsaken the religion of his youth, abandoned his kindred and desecrated the faith of his fathers. They express fanatical hatred for that "Meshumod" (spy, BAPTIZED) and accuse him as responsible for the burning of Jewish books, and causing innumerable Jewish deaths!

I reiterate, there are parents, even those who are irreligious Jews, strange as it may seem, who would much rather go behind the bier of their children, than to see them be initiated into a religious life by "Schmad." That detestable kind of wickedness, that burning hate, shame, has been from childhood inculcated in their hearts and minds. Memories will begin crowding in their minds of their mother's love and devotion, notwithstanding that their mother may have long since passed away. Only very recently a Jewish man and wife told us in no uncertain terms, that there is one thing they will under no circumstances violate or break, and that is not to keep "Jahrzait" (the anniversary of a parents' death, which is observed from year to year. A light is kindled as a symbol of the soul of the departed parents). The Psalmist correctly says, parents have a sacred obligation to guard their children, for a time, but the ETERNAL is always protecting them. (Psalm 27:10).

Jesus says, in no uncertain, unwavering terms, "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that does not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37, 38). Jesus also declares, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieves shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16). Also, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always,

to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20). The essence of His gracious promise "LO" is for our strengthening and comfort. We fully realize folk are folk, and are "stiffnecked," stubborn, unyielding, and persistent "in their own way." It is essential to make it crystal clear that although the transformation may seem exceedingly difficult, to the candidate, he must meet the requirement of the New Ordinance. Repentance must precede the ordinance of BAPTISM. Baptism, symblizes our death, burial and resurrection with Christ!

Jesus alone can bridge the abyss between Judaism and Christianity. Jewry has tried to keep the history of Jesus out of their literature, so as to keep HIM away from their mind.

In spite of the manifold obstacles, and being confronted with great hardship and danger in my involvement with individual Jews as I try to acquaint them with the Messianic truth, and the salvation which is Jesus, I find here and there, sons of Abraham who are sincerely wanting the Biblical Scriptures, not on a theological level, but to have a better understanding of that which is full of the Messianic flavor. The Gospel, which is the power of God, has pierced, penetrated and persuaded Jews to surrender to Him as the Mochiach (Messiah) and joyfully submit to that sacred solemn rite, BAPTISM.

The Holy Spirit says, "Be ye also Patient," and not to grew weary, because we do not see the harvest of our seed sowing immediately! Hence, we have the assurance that some Jews will be receptive to the Christian teaching as we give witness to Christ! His WORD is light!

The more one studies God's word the more significant, important, and momentous it becomes. In reply to the Jews cry on Pentecost, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter exclaimed and challenged them with the powerful words, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). As a blood bought Christian, I feel that I have a right and a deep sense of duty to challenge the evangelists, in view of the irresistible evidence of sublime facts, that BAPTISM, which is essential to salvation is not even being mentioned. This is very disturbing and challenging. The older I get, the more significant I see BAPTISM to be. One should stand in awe before the majesty of God, and realize the great responsibility that rests upon him, and should make a greater consecrated effort to preach the Gospel "in season and out of season," uncompromisingly, fearlessly, and unreservedly. Many men have and are still struggling to explain away the fundamental truths, the basis of Christian faith, that the rite of baptism is unnecessary. Some offer ingenious explanations "blummen-schprache" (flower language or figure of speech). Others indicate that is not even important enough to debate or argue, but without success, of course. Dear reader, I reiterate, that baptism is the integral part interwoven in Christ's command, notwithstanding that some noted evangelists denounce it, and say that a Jew can become a Christian without being BAPTIZED.

There is a tremendous struggle going on in Jewry concerning how they should cope with certain thorny problems! They cannot find a solution to the complicated and growing menace that some Jews become vulnerable to Christianity by assimilation through mixed marriages. Regardless of how loosely the relationship is interwoven between the Jew and the synagogue, they are relaxed, notwithstanding their religious disintegration. Nevertheless, there is a powerful defense which prevents the Jew from deserting to Christianity. It is the main line of resistance which holds back the Jew from taking the last step in leaving Judaism and embracing Christianity. It is "Schmad" (annihilation by Christian BAPTISM). Every Jew, whether Orthodox, Conservative or reformed (even if he has a liberal attitude toward Jesus) recoils in horror at the mere men-

tion of "Schmad." It symbolizes in graphic terms the worst sin a Jew may commit. In fact, sin is a mild word. When the word is mentioned, it ignites in the Jew a burning resentment that is hard to describe. Only a Jew can understand the terrible hatred rooted and grounded in their hearts and lives. It is being rehearsed so as to leave a permanent impression. It is repeated and passed from generation to generation, and has continued to this present day! Unquestionably, this is the basic factor that holds back Jewry from obeying the "Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is their watchword and the rallying cry, and their ringing protest against "Schmad." My dear reader, please do not let anyone tell you otherwise!

CHAPTER 11

BELLA

We are living in peculiar days. Iniquity abounds. Strong delusions are impending. Dangers are looming. It certainly tries men's souls. In this country, yea, in Kansas City, Missouri, these chaotic conditions exist. Death and destruction are almost everywhere.

What is true in the physical and material is equally true in the spiritual which is far more important and weighty. If that is not enough, the television and radio are adding to the already existing confusion and every religion under heaven is being disseminated. The alphabet is exhausted in naming all of them. The bookstores are laden with books with such titles as "God is Dead." "The Passover Plot," etc., all trying to wreck the story of creation, inspiration of the scriptures, poisoning the hearts and minds of those who already have a watered down concept of faith, sin and salvation. Eternal life is being mocked, ridiculed and held in much contempt. Drunkenness, immorality, sin, smut, slime and crime are exalted.

This sordid and sinful condition brings to our mind the days of Noah. And Jehovah said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man forever for he is also flesh; yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years. And Jehovah saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen 6:5). "And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy

them with all the earth. Make me an ark." (Gen. 6:11-14). "And Jehovah said unto Noah, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark . . . and Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth." (Gen 7:1, 6).

Noah, the preacher of righteousness, preached and warned continually for 120 years, of the awfulness of sin and disobedience, but the people grew more wicked and sinful! The upper class, the wealthy said or figured, "why worry, we have our villas built on the high mountains where surely if perchance Noah's preaching comes true, we will escape." Others presumably thought, "so what, we have spacious, luxury yachts, sturdily built so as to withstand the most tempestuous wind and storm. The raging waves and flood waters will have no effect upon our sailing, WHY WORRY?" "That old man dreamer has been slobbering around us for so many years warning about a flood. It will never come to pass. As a matter of fact, not a cloud is in sight, yea, not even the size of a man's hand'." They all violently and contemptuously spurned the warning of the approaching disaster and condemnation that would come upon them. They said, "we will take the necessary precautions and go to our villas and enter our yachts and escape." Others thought those who had large boats would certainly come to their assistance, take them aboard, and thus they would be safe.

When the flood came suddenly, it must have been a cruel experience to see neighbors and friends perishing and hear their agonizing cries. They had failed to be awakened by the repeated warnings of Noah, REPENT. Some undoubtedly managed to escape for a little while by fleeing to their villas or into their yachts. But as the water rose, their hopes evaporated. The villas were inundated and crushed; the yachts were dashed to pieces on the rocks, Finally, all perished save Noah and the seven souls in the ark of safety.

I could mention other incidents in the scriptures of dire consequences which parallel the above example. There is a remarkable story which I believe will illustrate very vividly

and in a fascinating manner. It should throw some light on and explain the various ideas and concepts that are very prevalent today which I mentioned previously.

A young man, while attending college, became close friends with his room mate in a short time. Their association was cordial as they chummed together. Unfortunately, the young man was addicted to alcohol, a compulsive drinker. Drinking had such a grip on him that he was incapable of controlling his appetite for whiskey. He caused much misery for himself, his roommate and others with whom he associated. It was very painful and shocking to all.

The drunkard's friend had a dog named "Bella." There is an adage that 'a dog is man's best friend.' Truer words were never spoken. Bella was obedient to his master. The drunkard was such a weakling and indifferent that he took everything very lightly. His roommate friend warned him continually and cautioned him of the dire consequences that awaited him if he did not quit drinking and change his profligate life. His roommate forgot his own weariness, the shame he had suffered and went steadily on giving of his time unstintingly to save the drunkard from wreck and ruin.

The alcoholic had many great talents and possessed outstanding capabilities but alcohol had lain them waste. Despite all the sympathetic kindness, ambition, dedication, and untiring devotion of his friend, the alcoholic paid very little attention to his friend who talked, argued, reasoned, entreated and counselled seemingly without results.

When one is confronted with a tragic and unfortunate situation as that of his friend who had become addicted to drinking, there is one thought that always arises in your mind. It is of tremendous importance. In order to rectify and reform others, one must first think of his own life, his own condition, and whether his model or pattern generates the fine attributes that he wishes others should conform to so

as to bring incitement to action. In this case, the compassion for his friend was genuine with no ulterior motive behind it.

One night after a terrible orgy of excessive drinking, he had a horrible dream about the roommate's dog, Bella. After the hangover had left him, he related his terrible dream to his friend. He said that Bella had opened the door, entered the room with a Bible, and sat down on the bed, opened the Bible and preached to him a warning similar to that given by his friend. Bella tried to enlighten him and to make him understand that such a course as he was following would only lead him to wreck and ruin. He was specific, and said in no uncertain terms that if he did not change his ways of living that it would lead to a condition of complete physical impairment and that in a short time he would be a corpse. Then the dog read Jeremiah 1:9, "Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth and the Lord said unto me, 'Behold, I have put my word in your mouth'," and closed the Bible.

After hearing the grim and devastating warning given by Bella to the alcoholic, his roommate urged him to take the words to heart and not dismiss it lightly. His attitude must be changed from unrighteousness to righteousness.

The alcoholic tried for several days to quit drinking but his associates ridiculed and mocked him with the taunting words 'milktoast,' 'sissy,' etc. Soon he went back to his camping ground of unstableness, misery, destruction and drinking as before.

But the dog, Bella, was in his way and like a shadow followed him around constantly reminding him of his evil ways. Each day the pressure of Bella intensified the haunting memory of the dream. Greatly alarmed and annoyed, the alcoholic in blind hate and wicked rage decided to take revenge on Bella. He tied a stone around the dog's neck and threw him in the river nearby. He hoped this cruel act would erase the nightmarish memory of his dreadful dream which

had been perpetuated and multiplied in his mind and conscience. But he was wrong, yea, dead wrong. Instead of blotting out the memory of the dream, it redoubled its vividness. Bella glaringly stood before his mind's eye and the dog's prediction came true much sooner than in the dream. The alcoholic was a corpse in three weeks.

The awesome dream of Bella which depicted the "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked 'drunkard' is only an illustration; but what a truth it contains! It should have a sobering effect upon those who are victims of unbelief, pride, vanity, filthiness and slander. How sad and sorrowing it is that folk fail to heed the repeated warnings of God. "See that you refuse not him who is speaking for if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven." (Heb. 12:25). Those who are following a questionable policy are being destroyed as "wood, hay and stubble."

We know it is exceedingly hard for one to keep his garment unspotted from the world. Equally, we realize and fully comprehend how difficult it is with divine strength to rise to the heights of courage required to resist temptation that is constantly before us in increasing measure. Often it seems intensely alive and full of pleasure, promising perpetual happiness, sometimes kindling imagination of endless gaiety.

In reality, the alluring world spreads only a devastating future before us. God is grieved by our disobedience. He is ready to deliver, to forgive, to bless, to help, to quicken, and to comfort. Let us continue boldly, uncompromisingly and unreservedly to promote these principles in the power of His grace to save. God can transform the infidel, the agnostic, the compulsive drunkard, yea the world. God would multiply fruitfulness and joyousness to everyone, yea, tenfold.

CHAPTER 12

A ROUGH EXPERIENCE

A dear friend, a brother in Christ, Dr. Ralph Crabtree, who was also an elder in the Oak Cliff church of Christ, was an eye, ear and nose specialist. Although I had a Hebrew Mission in Dallas, I was burdened to visit Jewish communities in other cities to bear witness whenever I had the opportunity. Upon returning from visiting Ft. Worth (about thirty miles from Dallas) I phoned Dr. Crabtree for an appointment. I could hardly sleep that night because of the excruciating pain in my EARS. It was torture. (Dear reader, that was a different type earache than you may have had). The next day when I came into his office, there were several patients, among them was my very good friend a widely known evangelist, brother Gus Dunn. He exclaimed, "Brother Eckstein, what happened to your EARS, they are so swollen all around!" Usually when I labor among the Jewish people, I go to stores and discuss inside and outside on the sidewalks. I never have a crowd. Two or three at the most. Here is the frightening story which brought me to Dr. Crabtree's office. While in Denver (before I was married) I had several lesser experiences having my EARS boxed, but not as ROUGH as of that particular event of which I am about to narrate.

While in Ft. Worth, on a summer day, I was standing in front of a secondhand store, (I had experience in Denver working in secondhand stores) discussing with two Jewish partners. Suddenly, another Jew came almost running and very excited toward me, yelling that he knew me. He exclaimed that he had seen me in front of their synagogue, trying to contact Jews as they were leaving the Synagogue

and telling them that Jesus is the Mo-Chi-Ash (Messiah) but fortunately no one would even turn around long enough to stop and look, let alone to listen. He was a man in his late fifties and evidently not very long from the Old Country. He wore himself down with exhaustion from rage, and in his blind hate, trembling, shrieked, "PAUSHE YISROAIL" (you miserable sinner in Israel). As the anathema rang out over the sidewalk, he took a hold of my EARS with his strong hands, pulled and shouted, "these ears which heard from Mount Sinai, 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,' and which now listen to gods of flesh and blood, stone, etc. must be pulled out from his head." The two Jewish partners, who were joined by another Jew, thought it was funny and roared gleefully with laughter, while I was in agony. He further screamed, "I do not want others to gain the ears of a "MESHUMOD" (one annihilated by Christian Baptism).

That religiously devout Jew who inherited tendencies to hate, is like other misguided sons of Abraham. They are enmeshed, or entangled in the mechanical and deathly traditions, like that ex-Jew, the Apostle Paul, who thought by making havoc among the infant church, thereby would receive a compound blessing which would be laid for him in heaven. I was not appalled by the grim vicious action of this Jew who wanted to maim me by trying to pull my ears out of my head. He thought he was pleasing God. In spite of hardship, suffering and abuse, we must remain steadfast.

On the contrary, it should infuse in us more zest and zeal, knowing that he did it "ignorantly" and endeavor to dispel the veil of indifference and misunderstanding that envelops them, (2 Cor. 3:14, 15). After Dr. Crabtree examined me he said, "Brother Eckstein, fortunately, your hearing is not impaired, you will experience some discomfort, which in a few days will disappear." He gave me some medication to lessen the severe pain, which thank the Lord did disappear, and also the swelling. Now I am hard of hearing. I often wonder if it is not the result of that act.

CHAPTER 13

THE CROSS AND THE PIGPEN

The Jew detests the cross with a violent hatred. It is despised, abhorred and deemed most contemptible. The Jews shrink and shudder in disgust. That is true beyond the shadow of a doubt. I can cite countless instances, but I shall give only a few.

Once a famous Jewish actor, a matinee idol, died and his body was taken to a Jewish undertaker and prepared for burial according to the rituals of the Jewish faith. The newspapers reported that at his funeral, his admirers filled the chapel to overflowing and scores stood outside. When the rabbi began the eulogy, suddenly a charming friendly lady dressed in black came slowly down the aisle and approached the coffin near the platform where the rabbi was standing. She opened her purse and took out a small cross intending to lay it on the coffin. Immediately, she was prevented from doing so. At the same time, the rabbi interrupted his oration in commendation of the famous actor and told her politely that the actor was a Jew and that such an act was strictly prohibited. The lady was escorted back to her seat in the rear where she sat with tears streaming down her cheeks. Although that incident caused excitement, no one left. The rabbi, schooled in patience, resumed his eulogy. This incident with a cross is mild.

The cross cannot be separated from Christ. The cross produces great fear in the Jewish heart. This fear has been ingrained and rooted in them from childhood. The cross instinctively reminds a Jew of torture, cruelty and death. It brings back the history of the frightful "Shaiter-Hauffen"

(being burned at the stake). Many Jews suffered this fiery martyrdom. Thus, their hate for the cross has been intensified with the passing of the years. Unfortunately, the non-Jewish world has not the remotest conception of this intense hatred. Let no one tell you differently.

I had a wanderlust to travel, so I traveled extensively touching nearly every state in the union. I hopped freight trains and also rode the blinds and the very dangerous rods on the trains. Once I nearly lost my life. I remember it vividly! How can I ever forget such a horrifying experience! While riding in an open car on a long freight train. I did not know that it would pass through a tunnel because I could not read the sign in English. When the train entered the tunnel, the heavy thick smoke from the double engines nearly choked me. Had that tunnel been a little longer, I would not have survived. Fortunately for me, it was not an extra long one. I took my shirt and somehow wrapped it around my head and breathed with much difficulty, but survived that terrifying experience.

I also rode the rods when I couldn't get a blind. The cinders and little stones pelted my face so I placed a thick cap over my face in order to protect my eyes. That was my last ride on the rods. I found it too dangerous an adventure; it also deprived me from enjoying the natural impressive scenery.

When the train stopped for water in a small town in a farm community, I got off feeling hungry, very tired and somewhat frightened. It had been a very rough summer ride. I went into the residential district to see if I could find some yard work. I noticed that a man was mowing the grass, I approached the man and frankly told him that I was hungry and would like to work for some food. My beloved father had told us children emphatically not to lie nor steal under any circumstances but to ask. After asking me a few questions, he allowed me to work for several hours. After about three hours, he said he did not want to be so unprin-

cipled as to let me work for just one meal but if I would stay over night, I could look for work in the morning or leave town. He indicated there was a job in town if I really wanted to work. He said that he and his wife lived alone as their children were grown and married.

After supper, we did not talk very much. Their life seemed serene and tranquil. I talked a very broken English but from our rather limited conversation I discerned that they were religious folk. I did not know what faith and it would have made no difference anyway. He kept calling me "stranger" and said they usually got up early but that I could sleep an hour longer. He showed me a cot prepared in the large front room and indicated I could retire anytime I wished. I was ready.

As I prepared to lie down on that summer evening, I noticed that a light shone in from a lamp pole on the corner near the house. The window did not have either curtains or shades. Just then, the good man turned out the light and said, "Stranger, I hope you have a good night's sleep." Looking around I saw a cage in a corner of the room with a parrot in it. Suddenly, I noticed a large cross on the dresser outlined in the light shining through the window, staring me in the face! I became intensely emotional. A cold sweat stood out on my forehead. My eyes turned green. The parrot remained perfectly motionless, yet was intensely alert.

In desperation, I took the cover and completely covered my head. The silence was broken only when I moved on the cot. Suddenly, the parrot began to mechanically chatter, "stranger, stranger, stranger." When I uncovered my head just enough to peep through, the light from the pole reflected on that cross as if it was staring right at ME! I tried to uncover just a tiny bit, but to no avail. The more times I uncovered slightly to peep, the larger the cross appeared and the more shocking it became as fear gripped my heart.

With lightning swiftness, I remembered a frightening

incident which I had experienced in Latvia. One time I found a silver cross and showed it to my rabbi. Quickly he grabbed me, bit my arm and yelled in a loud voice, "throw that abomination into the corn field, throw that abomination into the corn filed." It was green in my mind.

Needless to say, I did not sleep that night notwithstanding that I had sore muscles from being cramped on the rods for over two hours the previous day. I counted the minutes waiting for daylight to appear. The parrot and the cross were enough to drive me to sheer madness. I was sorry I had accepted the wonderful hospitality of this good couple. Had I known that a cross was in that room, under no circumstances would I have accepted their invitation.

In the morning, I thanked them wholeheartedly for their kindness shown to a "stranger." I realized it was not their fault but knew I could not explain what had happened. So I left.

We see so much inconsistency, the illogical, that we are dumbfounded and puzzled. Not only was I inconsistent with respect to this man's hospitality but likewise were other Jews to other situations. For example, a Jewish housewife may keep a "Kosher" (food prepared according to Jewish dietary laws) house but may make a slip now then by having pork chops or ham. But strange as it may seem, rarely, yes very rarely, if ever, will you find lard in her home. Such a philosophy does not harmonize. As one would say, 'he will eat the soup but will not eat the meat.' But it is a fact nevertheless. A Jew is prohibited from eating pork. There is a popular jest among Jews "Traif-wechazir' '(unclean as pork, from a religious point of view only). The connotation of a "chazir" (swine) is enough to cause a religious Jew to become nauseated.

But sometimes life is stranger than fiction. For example, things that are so deeply rooted as "hate" can become the most "loved." Please bear in mind the attitude of a Jew toward "chazir" (swine).

While laboring in the gospel of Christ among the Jewish people in Kansas City, I noticed a Jew coming toward me with a Yiddish newspaper in his pocket. After all, it is the man on the street with whom we are dealing. I asked him in Yiddish what kind of a "landsman he is?" (from which country he came). At first, he looked rather amazed and inquired why I had asked him that question since it seemed rather out of place. When I told him who I was and what I was doing, he manifested such an amicable spirit that I was astounded. If a Jew can be approached at all, as a rule he shows hostility. After answering my question, he related a terrifying experience.

In 1939, the German legions invaded Poland, bombarded his town, killing many Jewish men, women and children, burned the synagogue and Jewish cultural centers. A number of Jews fled to the thick woods and escaped the beasts; others joined the partisan guerrillas.

After wandering in the woods for sometime, half-starved and scared, this Jewish man and his sister came to a small farm. The Gentile Polish farmer took pity on these two frightened and famished human beings, almost reduced to emaciated skeletons, and gave them some bread and potatoes to eat. The farmer told them they could remain with him only a few days. If a spy or informer should betray him for harboring or hiding Jews, he would be shot on the spot. SS patrols were hunting Jews like wild beasts.

On the third day, the farmer came running from the field through a short cut panting and almost paralyzed with fear. He exclaimed that the Germans were heading toward the farm and would soon arrive to search for Jews who might be hiding there. If they were found, all would be executed immediately. Therefore, they would have to leave at once.

The brother and sister had to do some quick thinking as every minute was precious. It was a matter of life and death. Like a flash, the pigpen came to their mind! A pigpen

is bad enough in this country but much worse in Poland and Latvia. Here in this country they are usually fenced in and the sanitary condition is different. The writer remembers when in Latvia how the farmer who had a pigpen would roll up his trousers, go in barefooted, and literally sink in the pig dung. The stench was almost unbearable!

The brother and sister happened to come from a family who operated a "kosher" butcher shop. They were very strict and tried to conform to the minutest details so as to keep a kosher place. Fresh meat which was not "kosher" was not permitted to be laid near the "kosher" meat for fear it might become contaminated. Pork was absolutely prohibited.

The brother and sister pleaded with the frightened and terrified farmer to bury them in the PIGPEN under the manure straw that was saturated with pig dung and other filthy, stinking, dirty manure. Knowing that the SS had immaculate uniforms and patent leather boots, they thought that the Nazis would never dream that human beings were buried in a PIGPEN under the dung. It was a desperate gamble, but they were willing to take the risk. The farmer consented, so the brother and sister went into the filthy PIGPEN and the good-hearted farmer covered them so completely that they could just breathe enough to maintain life. One false move and they would be "caput" (put to death). (There were many instances during the Nazi holocaust where Gentiles risked their own lives in hiding the Jews to save them from death).

When the SS arrived in a truck, an officer and several soldiers alighted and immediately asked the farmer if he had seen any Jews around. Then they began to look around, search the house, the barn, the cellar. When they saw the pigpen, they quickly passed by as the stink and smell was awful, and too they did not want to dirty their slick, shiny boots with pig dung. (The military, especially in Germany, were trained that everything must be clean, immaculate. My

first Jewish convert, brother Stephen Neederman, was in the Austrian-Hungarian cavalry. He told me that the inspecting officer would take out a handkerchief and wipe it across the horse to see if the cavalry man had really cleaned his mount. They had to be very particular in their procedure).

The Nazi did not stay long as they had other missions. As soon as they left, the farmer ran to the pigpen and helped uncover the buried Jews. They were saturated with pig dung and told how several times the "chazairim" (pigs stepped on them. Nevertheless, that awful and terrifying experience had saved them from torture and death.

The very things we hate intensively, that we detest, abhor, even curse, turn out to be the most loved, cherished, blessed, protecting us from danger and death. The pigs and their pen which the Jew so abhorred, would not even handle for fear of nausea let alone eat, became to them a refuge, shelter, asylum, a safe place, a SANCTUARY. Although usually the stink alone of the pigpen would be enough to drive them away, yet they welcomed the stench and filth which actually protected them from the Nazi even coming close to the swine. THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO THE JEWISH MAN AND HIS SISTER.

You say it is too fantastic to be true. It really happened. The Jew summed up the horrible experience saying, "if anyone would have told me when we were operating a large "kosher" butcher shop that a PIGPEN would literally save our lives, I would have said that he was crazy, demented, insane!"

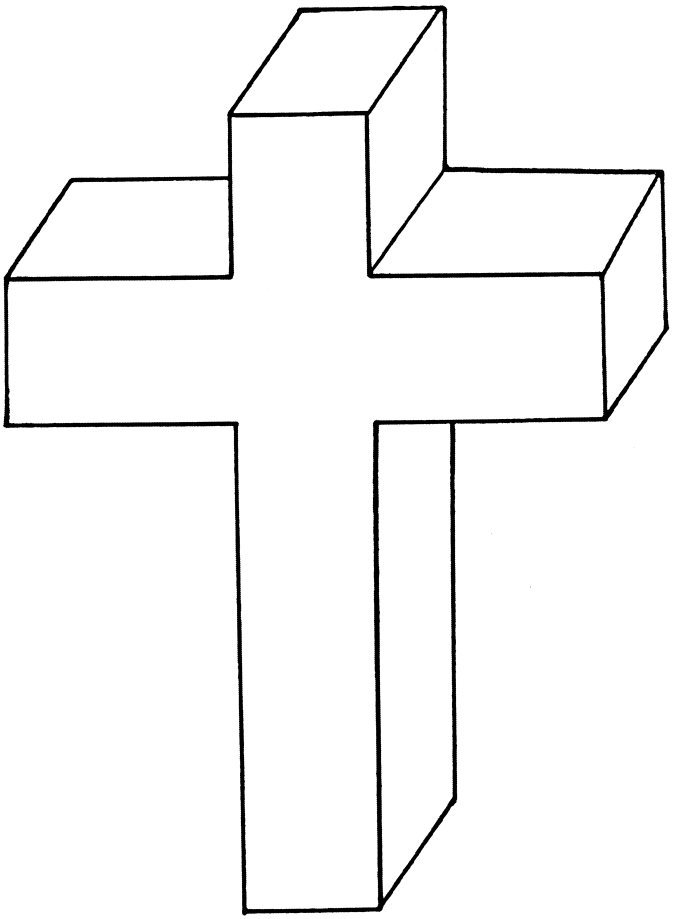
Saul of Tarsus (later the Apostle Paul) was first an agent of Satan, and enemy of the Cross. The story is vividly portrayed in the Book of Acts how he invaded the homes of Christians, dragging out men, women, and children and committing them to prison; how he stood by as others stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Perhaps Stephen had been a classmate when he had attended the great academy

in Jerusalem under the renowned tutelage of Rabbi Gamaliel. Like a wild ferocious beast, Saul had raised havoc with the infant church.

After his conversion, that which he had so violently hated, despised and persecuted, became the CENTER of his life. He himself powerfully and effectively expressed it many times in various ways. "I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," "I preach Christ crucified," "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation," etc. He sums up all his statements with these crowning words, which are meaningful and potent, "I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: IT IS NO LONGER I THAT LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: AND THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IS IN THE SON OF GOD WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME." Gal 2:20. (Incidentally, this is the first scripture I memorized from the New Testament. Oh, how I treasure it.)

My first convert from Judaism to Christianity was brother Stephen Neederman, who was past three score and ten when he was immersed into Christ. A few years later, he gave me an envelope and told me not to open it until after his death. He stated that he was fully aware that as an aged man he could not expect to live very long, but that although I was young I had no assurance of life.

After he fell asleep in Jesus, I opened the envelope which he had given me nearly four years before. There was a sheet of white paper. A cross was drawn on the sheet and two words were written, one on each side. But the cross and the two words had volumes to tell. My dear reader, please look carefully on the following page at the cross and the two words. You will not only be thrilled and filled, but your heart will be overbrimmed with joy. The two words as you see are "ONLY HOPE." Who can fathom the full meaning of the two words ONLY HOPE? That letter to me is precious and priceless. The mechanical deadly traditions and customs



Only Hope

which superceded the law put a curse on that cross and caused brother Neederman to hate and despise it. However, after his conversion, the cross became to him the noblest conception and he humbly and beautifully made public its worth in his life and in his death.

After I came out from the liquid grave, the burning hatred and great contempt for the cross, which conveyed the embodiment of everything that is evil, became to me precious, sweet, and fragrant. It was so pleasant and so significant that I took the Bible and opened it to that gripping compelling passage John 20:25-29, bowed my knees in humility of spirit and placed my lips at the phrase, "print of the nails," and kissed it, an outward expression of the inward joy of love and loyalty!

We hope and pray that the Jewish man and his sister who have been blinded by traditions, dogmas and customs, may see that Jesus is the promised Messiah. His Word is light and power.

CHAPTER 14

IF I HAD NOT COME

A man had a dream that he went to Jerusalem. The streets were filled with people, all strangers to him. When the church bells began to chime, people began to stream into the church. After the church building was filled with worshippers, an elderly man suddenly arose and began to explain the reason why they had assembled themselves together. He said, "We are representatives of the various Christian nationalities and are ripe enough and capable enough to walk in the light of our own understanding. Therefore, we need not to be influenced by Christ and it is unnecessary to bear HIS name."

The speech had a reeling effect upon the people. Immediately, they began tearing down the Scripture mottos from the walls and throwing them to the floor. After the initial waves of enthusiasm subsided, a small side door opened. A DIGNIFIED, MAJESTIC FIGURE ENTERED. All felt it was JESUS. Everyone was electrified; everyone was quiet; a sacred hush swept over all of them. Then the Lord Jesus Christ spoke, "I do not want to force myself upon suffering humanity. If I am not wanted, I will withdraw myself. Everything that I brought and everything that was erected through ME, I will take back." HE VANISHED! No one dared to utter a word; all left the building in a solemn and quiet attitude.

As they walked through the city, they noticed the many empty places. There were no church buildings, no hospitals, no orphan homes. They saw a funeral procession, the loved ones left behind, bowed in hopeless sorrow, because there

was no minister to comfort or enclose them with the precious promises of the RISEN CHRIST and HIS GOSPEL.

When the people who were accustomed to read a portion of Scripture, before they gave thanks for their food, opened their Bibles, they were horrified and bewildered—only BLANK PAGES. The Bible had vanished because Christ is the EMBODIMENT OF THE SCRIPTURE. Without Jesus, the Bible consists only of COVERS. The BOOK of BOOKS, the most remarkable document in existence, which was to suffering humanity a source of comfort and power, was nowhere.

When the man awoke from his dream, he was frightened and trembled. After he came to his senses and regained his balance, he thanked God it was only a terrible dream. It was a happy feeling to know that Jesus would never withdraw Himself. What would our LIFE be if Christ had not come? But thank God, He did come! Through His birth came Light, Life, Love and Liberty. (John 12:46; Gal. 4:4-5; John 3:16).

"As many as receive Him to them He gave power to become Sons of God." As He did come, He knocks at the door of your heart. We should open our heart and let Him in. He comes not as a stern judge or as a cruel master, but as a FRIEND, LORD, and HELPER. When we let Him in, He will cleanse our lives, heal our wounds, fill our hearts with heavenly thoughts, and give us power to follow Him who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.

A famous artist painted a portrait based upon the compelling and gripping passage of scripture, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with ME." (Rev. 3:20). Upon the completion of the masterpiece, he invited his friends to view it and give their verdict. Everyone marveled at the painting, at the colors, the PERSON, the door, etc. After a pause, one of the visitors said,

"the painting is wonderful, marvelous, BUT there is something missing on the door." "What do you mean?" inquired the master. His friend answered, "the DOOR KNOB is missing." The master replied, "the door knob was left out PURPOSELY. Christ does not want to open the door. He only knocks. He wants men to open their hearts. Christ does not want to break into or force his way in. He knocks SOFTLY, TENDERLY. He gave us freewill. It is up to us to let HIM in." "As many as receive HIM, to them gave He power to become sons of God." (John 1:12).

Jesus said, "If I had not come . . ." (John 15:22). Thank God He did come. His advent brought joy and happiness to the sad and sorrowing, and has shed forth the radiant rays of a glorious STAR in a benigned and darkened world. God dissipated the darkness which covered the earth. His revelation of HIMSELF IN JESUS CHRIST was a turning of spiritual darkness into the LIGHT and this LIGHT, He is ever ready to impart to you. Will you receive it? Come to Him while mercy lingers. Confess the sweetest name that ever graced the lips of men, and be buried with Him in baptism. Then you will be able to sit in the heavenly mansions, at the royal table, in the presence of God's own son, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. How thrilling is this anticipation.

CHAPTER 15

A POWERFUL IRREVOCABLE WITNESS

I had a terrifying and sardonic experience when I was in Cleveland, Ohio over a half century ago. I could hardly speak English; my life and thoughts were bitter, and my faith in humanity shaken. Justice, kindness and truthfulness, which are inexhaustible, were trampled under foot. I got a job as a dish washer in a restaurant. I worked there four days, twelve hours a day. I was supposed to have been paid one dollar a day plus my three meals. When it came time to be paid for the four days, the owner refused to pay me, told me to leave, and called me a "green-horn."

As I continued to look for work, I was confronted by extreme discrimination in the midst of a hostile environment. The days were dark within and without; truly an abyss, most frightening! I was not occupied with nor in any measure interested in spiritual matters. On the contrary, hatred and contempt welled up in my heart toward things sacred.

It was in the winter with the temperature near zero. The wind blowing in from Lake Erie was penetrating indeed, and the fine snow whipping around made breathing difficult. My coat, not an overcoat, was pulled up to my chin and fastened with a straight pin, trying to keep out the cold. There I stood on the corner, my feet nearly frozen, my stomach empty and shrunken from lack of food. I had a nickel clutched tightly in my hand. You see dear reader, that nickel was very important to me. I could go into the theater and stay there through the night. That is exactly what I did. The moving picture shows (not many) stayed open all night. I

remember very well that that particular theater lacked beautiful ornate sculpture and paintings; neither was it elegantly furnished with soft cushions, draperies, or chandeliers. To me the entertainment was secondary, as the main thing was to keep out of the cold and get some rest. I did not have the fifteen cents for a night's lodging. Although the air was stuffy, no one complained or cared as I presume many in the audience were in a predicament similar to mine.

I say it not with pride but to impress upon you dear reader that my physical predicament was not the only chasm in my empty life; spiritually I was utterly destitute. Religion was reprehensible to me; settling down, marrying, having a home and family were as remote in my thoughts as the poles are from each other. My only concern was for the coin I held in my hand for fear it might slip through a hole in my pocket and be lost.

If at that time while standing on the corner almost frozen and extremely hungry, hope of improvement growing dimmer and dimmer by the moment, in this weak and devastating situation with nothing to look forward to but an ever increasing weight of crushing hardship, and the will to live slipping away, suddenly someone would have stepped up behind me, tapped me on the shoulder and said to me: "In a little over a half centry from now, you will stand on this very same corner. You will have lived past the age of seventy, be married, have four sons and one daughter, nine grandchildren, and still more astounding, you will have been converted from Judaism to Christianity, and even have engaged in missionary work among your co-religionists for many years. You will have proclaimed Christ the Messiah in various cities; you will have preached in numerous churches in many cities and here in Cleveland. You will have a son as a minister in a congregation in Cleveland and another will be a third year resident surgeon in a large Cleveland hospital." If I had heard this, I would have been afraid to turn around or even look, much less listen, to such a stupid, insane, shattering

person. If I could have collected my wandering thoughts, and even gotten my senses together enough to give a reply, it would have been, "such a prediction could only proceed from a crazy, demented mind; it would be utterly impossible, unimaginable."

In the fall of 1967, over fifty years later, I had the occasion to revisit the great metropolis of Cleveland, Ohio. My primary purpose in going was to receive a physical checkup at the University clinic. I have several internal illnesses and also have glaucoma. After a detailed examination, it was decided that surgery was not advisable. Somewhat relieved in mind, and having two sons in Cleveland, I decided to spend some time visiting them.

One afternoon my surgeon son took me for a ride, passing through the area of my horrifying experience over fifty years previously. A peculiar feeling passed over me. Immediately the terrifying experience became green in my mind. It seems impossible to convey in words my feeling.

As we approached the intersection of 55th and Euclid, I noticed many changes. The old outmoded buildings had been replaced by modern ones; the streets were filled with motor cars zooming along at high speeds; the sidewalks were filled with pedestrians hurrying to their destinations. It seemed that everything was geared for speed.

But all of this is of little consequence in comparison with the change that has been wrought in me by the grace of God. As we waited for the street light to change, I was overwhelmed. My heart became filled with deep gratitude for God because of His unbelievable mercy. If it had not been a busy intersection, I would have dropped down on my knees and sobbed! How can I ever thank Him enough for His loving kindness and compassion, that upon my ruins, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation, He could build something of service!

It took almost a month for me to come to the United

States. We thought that we would never reach the shore. Now you can have breakfast in New York, and dinner in London or Paris. Notwithstanding the continually changing conditions which have radically revolutionized the world; the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news, has not changed. Mankind must accept salvation on the same terms as when Jesus established his church.

Not glorying in anything but the cross of Christ, all these things which were far beyond my horizon fifty years ago in Cleveland have now become realities. I have been married fifty years to a devoted Christian wife who has helped me in every way possible. Our five children are all active in the Lord's work, teaching, proclaiming God's wonderful Word of power and of grace.

Although we have only "a little strength," God will magnify Himself in our feebleness! I pray that in my declining years that I may be stirred to intensify and energize my spiritual life, continuing to gladly and wholeheartedly give myself in service to my blessed Redeemer. Christ is powerful and in Him we are victors in this life!

CHAPTER 16

WALKING WITH GOD

Our Lord compared himself to a "HIGHWAY." He says of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6). How expressive are these words! The first indication or sign that the early Christians were designated as the Way is found in Acts 19:9, 23. A Christian believes it is necessary to walk on that "WAY" because it leads to a grand and glorious "GOAL." Every way has an end, especially the NEW WAY which gives life, joy, peace and blessedness.

The WAY points to a mount called "Golgotha." It does not begin in a university, in an art-institute, in archaeology, not even in the stock market, nor in nature, but at the foot of the cross.

When a person recognizes his unworthiness, his ruin, and his sinful condition, he deeply feels the sorrow of his wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked state, and accepts the invitation of the Gospel, the source of all Life, Light, Love and Liberty, comes to Jesus just as he is and accepts Him as the Christ, the Messiah, and receives Him as personal Saviour and Redeemer, and is immersed, SOMETHING HAPPENS! There is joy and rejoicing in Heaven over the salvation of one sinner.

The first walk starts on the new WAY as He is the Light of the world, (John 8:12). "If we continually walk in the light as He continually is in the light, we continually have fellowship with one another and the blood of Christ continually cleanses us from all sin," (I John 1:7). As light walkers, we begin to walk in the Kingdom of Light with a consenting heart and mind. Enoch walked with God. He believed

in God, (Gen. 5:24, Heb. 11:5). Faith or belief is the open eye of the soul. Only through faith can we see the Heavenly world. Only through belief can we see the Glory of Jesus Christ. Stephen saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, (Acts 7:56).

Only through believing can we understand God's word. Enoch believed in God and to him God was an absolute reality, not only in the mind or in theory, but in experience. He found that interior, tender fellowship with God.

On the other hand, the world in chaos, confusion, and contempt ignored God and did not fear him. It did not bring Him any thank offering for His countless blessings and tender mercies; it rejected the matchless grace offered to suffering humanity and continued in enmity and rebellion. Unfortunately, the same is prevalent today.

Notwithstanding the sinful condition that prevailed, Enoch recognized God and knew Him with a heart overwhelmed with utter delight. How Enoch came to know God, we do not know as the Bible is silent in this respect. He lived a life of righteousness and sanctity as he walked with God. When he visited a province, a city, a village or a tribe, yea, even a family, even a single person, he always sought to bestow new light and life because he walked and thought of God.

How wonderful when one receives new Light and Life, and becomes actually filled with HIM! He cannot do otherwise than to practically walk in HIM. He directs our steps and is the light to our eye; so was God to the soul of Enoch. He had a spiritual grasp of divine things! That is walking with God. Enoch felt all the time the nearness of God. He thought all the time what a privilege to talk with such a God. It was a safe walk, in an infallible direction, from the seen to the unseen. Therefore, even nature was to him wonderful and beautiful!

The same experience came to the disciples of Jesus. Jesus

was God incarnate, God manifest in the FLESH. As the Lord himself said, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son" (Matt. 11:27). The disciples could verify and joyfully bear witness, "We beheld His glory as of the only begotten from the Father," (John 1:14). They accompanied Jesus, and walked with Him through the valleys, fields, and deserts, upon the sea, in joy, also among His enemies, "they hated me without a cause," (Psalms 69:4, John 15:25). He delights greatly in those who really walk with Him, letting Him guide them into all truth. Jesus enriched them. How meaningful, potent and illuminating was everything in His presence, teaching with such clear explanation. The import was powerful. Such ought to exist today as we walk with Him. The Lord is with us. Choice company!

How sad and distressing to see that the Christians are not love-sick for our blessed Lord Jesus. How few are really walking with Him, and experiencing the deep, loving, holy, sweet, soothing and satisfying fellowship with Jesus. He does not crowd Himself upon our affection or companionship.

Walking with God is a sure and safe walk. Although it is narrow, Enoch did not stumble or fall. Enoch had to encounter and combat danger in that Godless age. Since the Lord was his shield, he did not stumble. God said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and great reward," (Gen 15:1). When the Lord Jesus sent His disciples out into a hostile world, He said unto them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth . . . and lo, I am with you always even unto the consummation of the age," (Matt. 28:18-19). They had assuredly His presence, love, and power, therefore, they were bold, courageous and fearless. They were not afraid of the Devil, neither death. They believed implicitly and took into consideration His protection and grace!

We do not know whether Enoch was engaged in agriculture, common labor, shepherding, or something else. Never-

theless, we do know that Enoch exerted a tremendous influence through his walk, which was purposeful and effective, a simple belief in God. He assimilated the divine character in whose image he was fashioned and by whose blood he was redeemed. The power arising from his example and general behavior is incalculable!

We are living epistles, pattern models, known and read of all men. As we let our light shine, we simply express with gladness by performing His will.

I believe the following story will help to illustrate the unmatched power of a man's influence, either for good or bad. Once a renowned scientist lived in a villa. His fame was comparable to that of Thomas Edison, the eminent American inventor. Although this learned, aged scholar had retired, yet he was active in various fields of civic endeavor. Naturally, he was honored and respected in that entire community for his great contribution to society.

One day, a man came to his villa and inquired about the famous scientist. He was told he was out in his flower-garden attending the beautiful plants. The visitor approached the scientist, saluted him, and kissed his hand. The amazed and astonished professor was deeply moved and said, "Why have you extended this extreme courtesy to me that you should kiss my hand? I do not know your name and have never met you, let alone done anything to deserve such honor." The visitor, with a joyful smile replied, "Professor, I am eternally grateful for what you did for our family and particularly our son Carl. You see, Professor, we have a son Carl who used to go to Sunday School and to church. He never missed any services. He was never late. When we had dinner, he always bowed his head and gave thanks. Christ was truly the head of our house.

"After graduation from high school, he went away to college. When he came home, we said, as was our custom, 'Carl, it is time to dress and get ready for Sunday School

and church.' To our amazement, Carl said he was not interested in Sunday School and church or anything pertaining to religion. 'Don't bother me anymore about Christianity. It is only for the ignorant and illiterate, not the intelligent.' Naturally, we were shocked, upset, saddened and greatly disappointed for Carl was a good conscientious son who had now brought upon us shame and disgrace.

"Later, Carl looked out the window one Sunday morning and noticed you carrying your Bible on your way to church. As we were getting ready to go to church without our son Carl, suddenly, he came in dressed, with his Bible in his hand, the same one he used to take to church, his face beaming with joy. When we asked him why he was going, he replied 'If the great scientist, a man of great learning and education, endeavors to follow Christ's teaching, I am determined to follow his example and try to pattern my life after Christ as does this distinguished scholar.' So we see the tremendous effects your powerful example had upon our son. In simple terms, you were walking with God. Our appreciation, Professor, is uncolored. We are grateful that through your example our family is once more undivided. Your public example is like that of Paul who said he was not ashamed of the gospel for it was the power of God unto salvation." The Psalmist also said that folks should read the Scripture by day, and meditate upon them by night.

We too can influence and persuade others through our walk, and by performing good deeds with joy and earnestness which is considered great in the eyes of God! Not through intensification of ideas, religious acts, festivals, opinions, so called visions, power, might, fame, or wisdom, BUT through our WALK in communion with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In this way we will receive and obtain His attributes and reflect the radiance of HIS GLORY. We will shine in such a way that others "will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven, (Matt. 5:16).

It would be senseless, useless and meaningless to take a blind person into a park in order that he might see the trees, the flower-gardens that contain dozens of varieties of flowers, lovely, with unusual brilliant breathtaking color combinations. It would be equally sheer mockery and contemptuous to take a deaf person to a concert where the orchestra played the lovely works of Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. The tones would be to him a locked world. The tremendous applauding would be to him nothing.

As the blind cannot see and deaf cannot hear, so is Christianity to the world. You cannot expect a man to know the joy and blessing, the consolation and hope of Walking with God from the terrestial to the celestial. To him it is inconsequential, meaningless, and unimportant.

In order for the man of the world to have the privilege of Walking with God, he must go to the source from whom all loving-kindness, great goodness, mercy, grace, blessing, and GREAT Salvation come. God is revealed in the Book of Books, the most remarkable document in existence, the Bible. God's infallible word demands no analysis, as faith demands no proof!

When word reached us that my uncle was going to send me a ticket to come to the United States, where extraordinary hospitality was extended to everyone, there was "Sosoun Vesimcho" (joy and rejoicing). That is a mild expression. My heart was full of happiness. You can't imagine the thrill! When I told my eminent and learned teacher, his face beamed with joy. The relationship between the teacher and the student was so wonderful and the enjoyment that existed was almost divine. Then he said, "It is a fateful day, indeed." To study was not a burden, a yoke but a great delight.

The people in Russia were groaning under the frightful and heavy burden of the corrupt, rotten and tyrannical government of the Czar. The Jews especially experienced per-

secution, oppression and its tragic consequences. When it became certain that my uncle had fulfilled his promise and the money came for my third class ticket, I began to make ready for the long journey. I well remember the first thing I did was to secure a map of the United States.

Previously, I had not taken a particular interest in the United States. I only had a birds-eye view in a telescopic way. I had never had the slightest inclination or idea that I would ever leave the village of Sassmack, Latvia and go to that far, far away grand and wonderful country of America.

Now that it had turned into a reality, I began to study seriously, thoughtfully and with deep earnestness in order to acquaint myself with that foreign country, in which I was looking forward to settling permanently. I found the cities where my uncle and first cousins lived. I also found the capital city of Washington.

Now heaven begins here. The scripture says that "Enoch walked with God." By faith we too can have heaven begin here. The primary condition is faith coupled with a childlike obedience. So, we believe on HIM and WALK with HIM, and receive light that reflects from HIM, which is from the Eternal Light. So filled with His Light, we are walking on the Highway of Holiness. Enoch walked with God and God took him to Himself. He did not see nor taste death. That was the first heavenly trip which the Bible mentions. It is not absolutely necessary for children of God to taste the sting of death. The more Christ lives and presides in our hearts, the more the fear of death diminishes and loses its power.

I would be unworthy and commit sin if I did not acknowledge and bear witness to God's unfaltering love for me in the past and present, (for while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us). His amazing grace has been manifested toward such a worm as I. My heart is overwhelmed with utter delight that God's love for me is unchallengeable. Hence, our attitude toward Him should be lamb-like, yielding, ready to

serve or to be slaughtered, and should always be absolutely and gladly in entire subjection to Him. Our love to HIM should be irresistible, and should burn is us as an unquenchable fire! Every blood-bought Christian should expand his capabilities for good. He cannot do otherwise. That is his nature.

As I come to the conclusion of the last chapter of my book "FROM GOLGOTHA TO HEAVEN," I approach it with solemnity and awe. In our vernacular, we would say, "walking the last mile to our goal" which is interesting, meaningful, inspiring and thought provoking. Interwoven in my life are personal experiences spanning over a half century. There has been nothing but goodness, and matchless grace. With intensive and reverent study, his teaching has been inculcated in my heart and mind. My major source of gladness has been that during the past fifty years I have had the opportunity and blessed privilege to exalt Christ and magnify holiness. How beautiful are the feet of them that publish peace.

I hope my book will be a spiritual gateway into the lives of others. I trust that my life and conduct has helped to elevate and sanctify that of others and Christ's glorious sunshine and love will be like a fragrant elusive perfume and will induce folk to follow with a faith coupled with obedience. As we walk with Him onward ond upward, His abiding presence and fellowship sustains us till some day we are enveloped in heaven in His Glory and dazzling splendor. If one soul is led to walk from "Golgotha to Heaven," I will have been greatly rewarded for my labor and toil. May we all strive to emulate Christ who walks and talks with us, and leads us from earth to heaven. There is joy in anticipation. "Because I live, ye shall live also." How thrilling is this anticipation! With what joy souls are looking forward to be WITH HIM IN HEAVEN AND TO BE LIKE HIM!

CHAPTER 17

SOSOUN VESIMCHO

No more fitting time can be found than when we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary, 1971, to take a retrospection of the day December 24, 1921. I am trying to estimate the glorious, happy, thrilling, wonderful and joyful recollections of that solemn date. Although the day was cold, the blizzard condition was of no consequence. The main thing was the wedding! The expression of joy was evidenced upon all on this extraordinary day.

Miss Bertha Margaret Foster, a bright, most attractive bride, looked so radiant, charming, sweet, full of hope in anticipation of a new epoch of life. She carried a bouquet of pink and white roses, and a Bible. The fragrance of the flowers permeated the atmosphere, as if all the druggists had hurled the contents of their perfume boxes in the air! She personified the supreme value of purity, virtue, modesty, devotion, faithfulness and prayer. These are not empty words, but a revealing index to her character! Her affection and love were reserved for "her life partner" when on that happy holy night we pledged our marriage vows, and were solemnized as husband and wife. (Literally "AND THEY SHALL BE TO ONE FLESH"). Our hope, aim and aspiration was to reach the highest Christian goal, leading precious souls to the Messiah, the Lamb of God, as their Saviour! During the years, I will say unhesitatingly that our sweet, tender, deep love for each other flowed forth like a warm ocean current. After a half century, the romance, thrill and excitement was relived in a most wonderful way!

The celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary was the

occasion that brought eight of my Jewish relatives from the east. With a peculiar feeling we were all thrilled to see them, but to our utter amazement they were present for the Sunday morning worship in the despised church of Christ (any church). Traditionally, this is unusual, extraordinary, almost incredible. It is a grave transgression and tantamount to idolatry. The Jewish community would brand a Jew as degraded, an outcast from the fold of Judaism, one guilty of betraying the principles of the creeds of Judaism by instituting the pagan mythology of the Christian religion. So you can understand dear reader the importance of so meaningful a reality, eight precious Jewish souls being present in a place where Christ is proclaimed and worshipped as the Son of God, the true Mo-chi-ach (Messiah), the Redeemer of the whole world! Words fail to express the joy and gratitude in our hearts, knowing they were given the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Tongues cannot express the throbbing of joy and ecstatic bliss I experienced!

The minister, Max Narramore, spoke from the great 90th Psalm which was interwoven with several scriptures from the "Brith-Hashadosha" (New Testament). In his humble and sincere message, he stated that in the providence of God my wife and I were spared to each other in cherished companionship on life's highway and are living, faithful full overcoming lives in rearing a family of children who are dedicated and faithful Christians.

As he related the extensive and unusual influence shown forth to us by Christians and to the people of the world, through sacrificing lives, teaching, proclaiming, writing, inspiring others to highest Christian ideals which is to imitate the Christ, it made us feel exceedingly humble and unworthy (which we know we are). Words fail to express the joy and gratitude which welled up in our hearts knowing that my relatives "flesh of my flesh and bones of my bones" were having an opportunity to hear the gospel. I could understand the innermost feeling of my Hebrew Christian brother,

the Apostle Paul, who said, "For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. 9:3). How I wish for their conversion, that they would accept Jesus as the Messiah so vividly prophesied in the Old Testament as the Christ of God! We believe Jehovah's word spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "His word shall not return unto him void." Blessed assurance! The thesis is the PROMISE. But the Lord is faithful. No promise from His Word will be broken. We thank Him for His solemn declaration. This is our glorious hope, "IF THOU SEEK HIM, HE WILL BE FOUND OF THEE" (I Chron. 28:9). What an assurance this promise gives to the SEEKER! "HE THAT SEEKETH FINDETH!" Oh, Lord, make this thy promise good even today! We are waiting in prayer and joyful anticipation! "He that believeth shall not make haste." (Isaiah 28:16).

Oh great, yea, compassionate God, Thou hast wonders in store for us, things never seen, heard of, or for that matter dreamed! The past assures us and the future reassures us. His name be praised! He has redeemed us, hence we are a NEW CREATION, "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, that you may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). What unspeakable grace! The followers of Jesus are the observed of all observers, "like a city that is set upon a hill that cannot be hid." (Matt. 5:14).

Our dear children and grandchildren graciously surprised us by their noble, dignified and excellent celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary Sunday the 26th of December 1971 at the Grandview church of Christ reception hall, from 2 until 5 in the afternoon. Despite the cold weather and drizzling rain, a large number of friends came out and showed their love, friendship and interest, well wishing, sharing our happiness. The good will and courtesy of the guests was overwhelming. As more guests arrived, the base-

ment became filled with well wishers. We were profoundly moved by the kindness manifested toward us in many ways —gifts and cards from a wide circle of friends. A long table was bedecked with a large artistically decorated cake, punch, nuts and dainties, attended by our charming granddaughters who served as hostesses waiting on the guests. Our grandsons were in charge of having the visitors sign the guest book. Everything was magnificent and enjoyable. Everyone was in a cheerful attitude and appreciative. It was very impressive indeed and long to be remembered. We were deeply touched by the exquisite flower arrangement which we found when we returned home!

In the midst of "SOSOUN VESIMCHO" (Joy and Gladness), something spiritually meaningful held a place in the back of my mind. My conversion and my dominant aim is to glorify God and lead precious souls to Christ. As heaven born and bound pilgrims, we are constrained to say that we have endeavored to accomplish faithfully and efficiently our task. Will say unhesitatingly and I am satisfied you will wholeheartedly concur with me that the consuming aim and highest service is to imitate Jesus Christ! If we are Christ's servants naturally we must be His followers. What a blessing and strength to pattern our lives after Christ!

We have taught our children the practical approach to the problems of life, which often are difficult but interesting. DO SOMETHING TODAY YOU CAN REJOICE ABOUT TOMORROW. That is a good, sensible, sound, solid motto!

As we celebrated our 50th anniversary, and offer tendered nearly a half century ago by a group of fine ladies whose organization was called "The Prayer Circle for Israel" came vividly to my mind. In a conference, they expressed a desire to build a $25,000 Hebrew Mission in the neighborhood of the Jewish community in Dallas, Texas plus full financial support. (One lady had large real estate holdings in the area.) Several of these dignified ladies belonged to the

wealthiest families in Texas, yet manifest a humble spirit. They said unequivocably that it would be necessary for us to sever our present relationship with the church of Christ and to affiliate with the First Presbyterian church or with the Scofield Memorial church. (The majority of the ladies were associated with the above mentioned churches.) They suggested we weigh carefully their offer.

Confronted by such an elaborate lucrative challenge we were thrown into a state of bewilderment. We fully realized that it would be nice, pleasant and useful indeed to have a fine house, plenty of food, acclamation of men, to be identified with the wealthier social classes, and have a fat bank account. On the other hand, we felt it would be wrong and not appropriate to accept; it would not be well pleasing to HIM. In other words, it would be sinful! We endeavored not to be ungrateful and unthankful to the "Prayer Circle for Israel," but politely and respectfully declined the offer. To Him be high eternal praise for His unceasing, unhindered and unchanging love for us. Hearken to the thrilling words of Our Saviour, the sheltering care of the Almighty! Since our Heavenly Father clothes the grass of the fields with a splendor such as Solomon could not equal, will He not clothe His children?

As I look back with a heart aglow with inward peace, I thank God for His grace and power in that trying hour to strengthen us to have said NO. We fully comprehend that "without ME you can do nothing." His NAME be PRAISED! Now we greatly rejoice that we did something that day that we can look back on and rejoice about each tomorrow. There could be no mistake about our decision whatsoever. Those who obey and yield to the necessary sanctifying process constitute the true church (Gal. 3:26-27).

His goodness, immeasureable loving kindness, matchless grace, has been manifested toward us for over a half century, far more than we deserve. We have had to work physically hard and experience pain, anguish, hardship, grief,

abuse and persecution. We say in deep humility that we did not lean on the arm of flesh. God may not give us pearls, platinum, silver or gold, but He will give us grace. He will permit trials but will give grace in proportion thereto. We may be called to labor and suffer with the CALL but receive all the grace required. There is boldness and intoxication in our gaze upward "from whence cometh our help." (Ps. 121:1). God knows our hearts, our purpose, our inward loyalty and loving surrender! Hence, the Lord's blessing comes because of the character and worth of the inhabitant and not because of the dwelling. Every day we found new evidence of the manifold grace of God! This is an outgrowth of the constant quality of steadfastness, not wavering in endeavoring to do the will of the ETERNAL!

Our oldest son, Stephen Jr. who is director of the church of Christ Bible Chair in Portales, N. M., wrote an article on our 50th SPIRITUAL "Shmitoh" (Jubilee). It is a tribute to the "CHESED" (extraordinary grace or faithfulness to HIS covenant) which we interpolate in our book.

Epilogue

SPIRITUAL JUBILEE

Stephen Eckstein, Jr.

During the recent holidays we had a once in a lifetime experience. It was to visit my father and mother in Kansas City and enjoy with them as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. It was a memorable event and brought home to me some very beautiful thoughts which I would like to share with you.

For many years, my father and mother have attended the Grandview congregation and have taught classes. When the reception was held there, hundreds of friends came to express their love and appreciation. Some came from hundreds of miles to be present. Cards came from all over the nation since thousands have read my father's autobiography "From Sinai to Calvary." It helped me to realize the wisdom of Solomon who said, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches" Prov. 22:1.

When my father became a Christian and left Judaism, some said he did so for money. However, fifty years has proved that when one seeks first the kingdom, the necessities of life will be provided by the Lord. My father and mother have sought to do this and have endeavored to lay up their treasure in heaven rather than here on earth. Although they have little in the way of earthly goods, they have a rich inheritance "imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you . . ." (I Peter 1:4).

I can also remember that through the years, the principle of Deut. 6:4-9 has been a reality in our home. Dad, Mom, my brothers, and our wives, my sister and her husband, and

friends, have talked about the Lord and His will in the mornings, afternoons and at night. This heritage cannot be taken away and I always will be thankful for this atmosphere of seeking and searching for the will of God. Every time any of us children would leave for our journey, Dad would always lead us in prayer. God has answered every prayer and kept us safe though we have traveled hundreds of thousands of miles over the world. Paul and John along with myself served in the army in World War II. My brother Lou served on a carrier in the Vietnam conflict. God has graciously spared us all and we can only bow in humble adoration for His love and grace.

My mother has been a tower of strength through the years. Many have talked to me about her great faith and love and what an inspiration she has been to them. I believe each of us children and Dad can truthfully say Proverbs 31:28 applies to my mother.

In Lev. 25:20, the Jew who was to celebrate the jubilee year might ask in unbelief, "What will we eat?" God answered, "I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year so that it will bring forth fruit for three years." And so as Mom and Dad celebrated their spiritual jubilee (50th year) God has and will continue to provide all spiritual blessings which are in Christ Jesus as well as the needs of this life.

In spite of their sins and frailties, my parents have endeavored to train us in the way of the Lord, both by word and deed. They know that they will be saved by the grace of God even as we. Let us all look eagerly for His coming to save us. (Heb. 9:28). Thank God for my parents![1]

As I take a retrospection of my life before I became His disciple, took up the cross, and began to follow my blessed Saviour over a half century ago, much is very vivid before me, fresh in my mind. When I arose from the liquid grave of

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[1] Stephen Eckstein Jr. "Spiritual Jubilee," THE VOICE OF THE BIBLE CHAIR, January, 1972.

baptism, I felt as if the blessed one himself, God's beloved Son, was speaking to me. I recall His gripping and compelling words, "Lo, I am with you always," proclaiming his power and authority! The assurance of His presence is vividly portrayed by the Psalmist who promised, "I will instruct thee and teach thee with mine eye upon thee" (Ps. 32:8). We need not fear dark chariots, the assaults of the adversary or other impediments. Hosts may be against us but the Lord of hosts is with us! "I am with thee" is the true answer (Jer. 15:20). What an encouragement! These promises made an indelible impression on me, inflamed and animated my heart and excited me with joy! Every thought in these words of the crucified one were as sparks from a "live coal from the altar." After that irresistible announcement, I fell down upon my knees and in deep humility and adoration, I began to sob thinking that such a "wretch, poor, miserable, blind" worm should have the priceless privilege to lift up the CRUCIFIED MESSENGER of CALVARY to suffering humanity. I know by long and varied experience the Christians highest spiritual goal is to glorify God and lead souls to Christ. This consuming purpose is the index of the love of Jesus that flames in our hearts, inspiring us to be steadfast, unmovable in our devotion and consecration. Yea, as the living sons and daughters of the living God, we cannot be grateful enough for this. It is so wonderful that we can praise the Lord Almighty morning, noon and evening that He wrought so marvelous a change in us! This heartens, inspires us and gives us hope for others who are steeped in sin to be changed by His Almighty grace! We praise Him for His loving favor. The child of God flourishes like a palm tree as he draws sap from the deep spiritual root, from Christ, through the Holy Scriptures! That gives us fresh encouragement and determination to march forward and upward!

Jehovah, our God, through His gracious providence has enabled us to complete this book *From Golgotha to Heaven*

as a sequel to my book *From Sinai to Calvary.* We pray that all who read this book may be transformed into deeper channels of blessing, causing precious souls to walk in the light as God is the light, through His infallible word, faithfully proclaimed. May our faith be changed into sight, where heaven awaits the faithful and where the gates NOW swing open before us, enraptured, joy, gladness and happiness without flaw and without end! HALLELUJAH!